A DISCOURSE ON FREEDOM OF THINKING IN Matters of RELIGION;

With it's just LIMITS and TEMPER,

NEITHER

INDIFFERENT nor INTOLERANT.

One is your Master, *even* CHRIST; *and all ye are* Brethren.
Matt. xxiii. 8.

Who art thou, that judgest another Man's Servant? To his own Master *he standeth or falleth.* Rom. xiv. 4.

OXFORD,

Printed for J. FLETCHER, in the Turl; R. and J. DODSLEY, in Pall-Mall, and J. FLETCHER, in St. Paul's Church-yard, LONDON; and W. THURLBOURN, and J. WOODYER, in CAMBRIDGE.

M.DCC.LXIII.

PREFACE.

THE sum of the following discourses is nothing but the sense of these words of scripture;

That since * we know in part, and prophesy in part, and that now we see through a glass darkly, we should not dispute or contend persons not to knowing as ourselves, but † bear that is weak in the faith we should receive, not to doubtful disputations; therefore certainly to charity, and not to vexations, not to those which are the occasions of impertinent wranglings. And provided they keep close to the foundation, which is faith and obedience, let them build upon it what doctrine they please, or [is precious, yet the foundation be entire, they shall be forgiven or rejected by us. And since we profess ourselves servants of Jesus, a master, and disciples of a charitable and infinitive, ‡ Let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called with lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, for this is the best endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit, when it is united in the bond of peace. And although

* 1 Cor. 13. † Rom. 14. ‡ Ephes. 4. 2, 3.

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The READER,

WHEN he ſhall have peruſed the following treatiſe, excelled perhaps by no other in ſound learning, ſolid ſenſe and genuine candour, will at leaſt pardon the editor for a well-intended alteration in the title, to — FREEDOM OF THINKING, *&c.—from* Liberty of Propheſying. *The* Old Title *ſeems to have cauſed a prejudice againſt even inquiry after the book, as the editor owns was the caſe of himſelf and every one of his acquaintance. It was written by Doctor, afterwards Biſhop,* Taylor: *and is now reprinted, ſeparate from his other works, with a hope of promoting thoſe Principles, with which, in proportion as they are promoted or diſcountenanced, Chriſtianity muſt itſelf flouriſh, or decay.*

As to the Style, the editor's deference for the author has generally preſerved the Original; though ſome particulars may now appear uncouth.

The long confutation of Anabaptiſm *is omitted. It was not in the firſt edition; but was added afterwards, in order to obviate ſome exceptions*

ceptions taken againſt the author at the time; *and is, in his own words,* " *quite foreign to* " *the argument of the Book, which is complete* " *without it.*"

But the Dedication *was too material to be parted with; and is converted into a* Preface, *by leaving out the complimentals.*

The reader will perhaps wonder to find here ſo many things borrowed (and unacknowledged, though not improved,) by ſubſequent writers of great name on the ſame ſubject; and will grieve, as well as wonder, that Thoſe writers, and This (by whom the ſubject was exhauſted) ſhould have found no better ſucceſs; but that men will yet, almoſt every where, violate one of the cleareſt dictates of Common Senſe, enforced by Divine Authority; will *not* do to Others, what they would have done to Themſelves; *will not allow, what They aſſume; and, what every One of neceſſity can not but aſſume* — FREEDOM OF THINKING *in* Matters *of* Religion.

PREFACE.

THE ſum of the following diſcourſes is nothing, but the ſenſe of theſe words of ſcripture;

That ſince * *we know in part, and propheſy in part, and that now we ſee through a glaſs darkly*, we ſhould not *deſpiſe* or *contemn* perſons not ſo knowing as ourſelves, but † *him that is weak in the faith we ſhould receive, but not to doubtful diſputations*; therefore certainly to charity, and not to vexations, not to thoſe which are the idle effects of impertinent wranglings. And provided they keep cloſe to the *foundation*, which is *faith and obedience*, let them *build upon this foundation matter more or leſs precious*, yet if the foundation be entire, they *ſhall be ſaved with or without loſs*. And ſince we profeſs ourſelves ſervants of ſo meek a maſter, and diſciples of ſo charitable an inſtitute, ‡ *Let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called with all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long ſuffering, forbearing one another in love*; for this is the beſt *endeavouring to keep the unity of the ſpirit*, when it is faſt tied *in the bond of peace*. And although it be

* 1 Cor. 13. † Rom. 14. ‡ Epheſ. 4. 2, 3.

a duty of chriſtianity, that * *we all ſpeak the ſame thing, that there be no diviſions among us, but that we be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment*; yet this unity is to be eſtimated according to the unity of faith, in things neceſſary, in matters of creed, and articles fundamental; for as for other things, it is more to be wiſhed than to be hoped for; there are ſome *doubtful diſputations*, and in ſuch † *the ſcribe, the wiſe, the diſputer of this world*, are moſt commonly very far from certainty, and many times from truth: There are diverſity of perſuaſions in matters indifferent, *as meats, and drinks, and holy days*, &c. and both parties, the affirmative and the negative, affirm and deny with innocence enough; for *the obſerver and he that obſerves not*, intend both to God; and God is our common maſter, we all fellow ſervants, and *not the judge of each other*, in matters of conſcience, or *doubtful diſputation*: And every man that *hath faith muſt have it to himſelf before God*, but no man muſt either in ſuch matters *judge his brother or ſet him at nought*; but *let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*: And the way to do that is not by knowledge, but by charity, ‡ *for knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth*; and ſince there is not in every man § *the ſame knowledge, but the conſciences of ſome are weak*; *as my liberty*

* 1 Cor. 1. 10. † Rom. 14. ‡ 1. Cor. 8. 1. verſ. 7. § 1 Cor. 10. 29.

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muſt not be judged of another man's weak conſcience, ſo muſt not I pleaſe myſelf ſo much in my right opinion, but I muſt alſo take order that his * *weak conſcience be not offended or deſpiſed*, for no man *muſt ſeek his own but every man another's wealth*: And although we *muſt contend earneſtly for the faith*; yet *above all things we muſt put on charity, which is the bond of perfectneſs*: And therefore this contention muſt be with arms fit for † *the chriſtian warfare, the ſword of the ſpirit, and the ſhield of faith, and preparation of the goſpel of peace inſtead of ſhoes, and a helmet of ſalvation*, but not with other arms, for a churchman muſt not be πλακτικος, *a ſtriker*, *for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but ſpiritual*, and the perſons that uſe them ought to be *gentle, and eaſy to be intreated*, and we *muſt give an account of our faith to them that aſk us with meekneſs and humility*; *for ſo is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men*. Theſe and thouſands more to the ſame purpoſe are the doctrines of chriſtianity, whoſe ſenſe and intendment I have proſecuted in the following diſcourſe; being very much diſpleaſed that ſo many opinions and new doctrines are commenced among us, but more troubled that every man who hath an opinion, thinks his own and other men's ſalvation is concerned in its maintenance; but moſt of all that men ſhould be perſecuted and afflicted for diſagree-

* Ibid. † Coloſ. 3. 14.

ing in ſuch opinions, which they cannot with ſufficient grounds obtrude upon others neceſſarily, becauſe they cannot propound them infallibly, and becauſe they have no warrant from ſcripture ſo to do: For if I ſhall tie other men to believe my opinion, becauſe I think I have a place of ſcripture, which ſeems to warrant it to my underſtanding; why may he not exact the ſame taſk of me to believe the contradictory? And then, ſince all the hereticks in the world have offered to prove their articles by the ſame means by which true believers propound theirs, it is neceſſary that ſome ſeparation either of doctrine or of perſons be clearly made, that all pretences may not be admitted, nor any juſt allegations be rejected; and yet that in ſome other queſtions whether they be truly or falſely pretended, if not evidently or demonſtratively, there may be conſiderations had to the perſons of men and to the laws of charity, more than to the triumphing in any opinion or doctrine not ſimply neceſſary. Now becauſe ſome doctrines are clearly not neceſſary, and ſome are abſolutely neceſſary; why may not the firſt ſeparation be made upon this difference, and articles neceſſary be only urged as neceſſary, and the reſt left to men indifferently, as they were by the ſcripture indeterminately. And it were well if men would as much conſider themſelves as the doctrines; and think that they may as well be deceived by their own weakneſs, as perſuaded by the arguments of a doctrine which other men, as wiſe, call inevident. For

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it is a hard caſe that we ſhall think all papiſts and anabaptiſts and ſacramentaries to be fools and wicked perſons; certainly among all theſe ſects there are very many wiſe and good men, as well as erring; and although ſome zeals are ſo hot, and their eyes ſo inflamed with their ardors, that they do not think their adverſaries look like other men; yet certainly we find by the reſults of their diſcourſes, and the tranſactions of their affairs of civil ſociety, that they are men that ſpeak and make ſyllogiſms, and uſe reaſon, and read ſcripture; and although they no more underſtand all of it, than we do, yet they endeavour to underſtand as much as concerns them, even all that they can, even all that concerns repentance from dead works, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: And therefore methinks this alſo ſhould be another conſideration diſtinguiſhing the perſons; for if the perſons be chriſtians in their lives, and chriſtians in their profeſſion, if they acknowledge the eternal ſon of God for their maſter and their lord, and live in all relations as becomes perſons making ſuch profeſſions; why then ſhould I hate ſuch perſons whom God loves, and who love God, who are partakers of Chriſt, and Chriſt hath a title to them, who dwell in Chriſt, and Chriſt in them, becauſe their underſtandings have not been brought up like mine, have not had the ſame maſters, they have not met with the ſame books, nor the ſame company, or have not the ſame intereſt, or are not ſo wiſe, or elſe are wiſer, (that is, for ſome reaſon or

other which I neither understand, nor ought to blame) have not the same opinions that I have, and do not determine their school questions to the sense of my sect or interest.

But now I know before hand, that those men who will endure none but their own sect, will make all manner of attempts against these purposes of charity and compliance; and say I, or do I what I can, will tell all their proselytes that I preach indifferency of religion; that I say it is no matter how we believe, nor what they profess: But that they may comply with all sects, and do violence to their own consciences; that they may be saved in all religions, and so make way for a *colluvies* of heresies, and by consequence destroy all religion. Nay, they will say worse than all this; and but that I am not used to their phrases and forms of declamation, I am persuaded I might represent fine tragedies before hand. And this will be such an objection, that although I am most confident I shall make apparent to be as false and scandalous, as the objectors themselves are zealous and impatient, yet besides that, I believe the objection will come where my answers will not come, or not be understood: I am also confident that in defiance and incuriousness of all that I shall say, some men will persist pertinaciously in the accusation, and deny my conclusion in despite of me: well, but however I will try.

I. And first I answer, that whatsoever is against the foundation of faith, or contrary to good life and the laws of obedience, or destructive

tive to human society, and the publick and just interests of bodies politick, is out of the limits of my question, and does not pretend to compliance or toleration: so that I allow no indifferency, nor any countenance to those religions whose principles destroy government, nor to those religions (if there be any such) that teach ill life; nor do I think that any thing will now excuse from belief of a fundamental article, except stupidity or sottishness and natural inability. This alone is sufficient answer to this vanity; but I have much more to say.

II. The intent of my discourse is, that permissions should be in questions speculative, indeterminable, curious, and unnecessary, *and that men would not make more necessities than God made, which indeed are not many.* The fault I find and seek to remedy is, that men are so dogmatical and resolute in their opinions, and impatient of others disagreeing in those things wherein is no sufficient means of union and determination, but that men should let opinions and problems keep their own forms, and not be obtruded as axioms, nor questions in the vast collection of the system of divinity, be adopted into the family of faith: And I think I have reason to desire this.

III. It is hard to say, that he who would not have men put to death, or punished corporally for such things, for which no human authority is sufficient either for cognisance or determination, or competent for infliction; that

that he perſuades to an indifferency, when he refers to another judicatory, which is competent, ſufficient, infallible, juſt, and highly ſevere. No man or company of men can judge or puniſh our thoughts, or ſecret purpoſes whilſt they ſo remain, and yet it will be unequal to ſay, that he who owns this doctrine preaches it lawful to men, to think or purpoſe what they will. And ſo it is in matters of doubtful diſputation (ſuch as are the diſtinguiſhing articles of moſt of the ſects of Chriſtendom:) So it is in matters intellectual (which are not cognoſcible by a ſecular power) in matters ſpiritual (which are to be diſcerned by ſpiritual authority, which cannot make corporal inflictions) and in queſtions indeterminate, (which are doubtfully propounded or obſcurely, and therefore may be *in utramque partem* diſputed or believed;) for God alone muſt be judge of theſe matters, who alone is maſter of our ſouls, and hath a dominion over human underſtanding; and he that ſays this, does not ſay that indifferency is perſuaded, becauſe God alone is judge of erring perſons.

IV. No part of this diſcourſe teaches or encourages variety of ſects, and contradiction in opinions, but ſuppoſes them already in being; and therefore ſince there are, and ever were, and ever will be variety of opinions, becauſe there is variety of human underſtandings, and uncertainty in things, no man ſhould be too forward in determining all queſtions, nor ſo forward in preſcribing to others, nor invade that

that liberty which God hath left to us entire by propounding many things obſcurely, and by exempting our ſouls and underſtandings from all power externally compulſory: So that the reſtraint is laid upon mens' tyranny, but no licence given to mens' opinions, they are not conſidered in any of the concluſions, but in the premiſes only as an argument to exhort to charity. So that if I perſuade a licence of diſcrediting any thing which God hath commanded us to believe, and allow a liberty where God hath not allowed it, let it be ſhewn, and let the objection preſs as hard as it can; but to ſay that men are too forward in condemning where God hath declared no ſentence nor preſcribed any rule; is to diſſuade from tyranny, not to encourage licentiouſneſs; is to take away a licence of judging, not to give a licence of dogmatizing what every one pleaſe, or as may beſt ſerve his turn. And for the other part of the objection;

V. This diſcourſe is ſo far from giving leave to men to profeſs any thing, though they believe the contrary, that it takes order that no man ſhall be put to it; for I earneſtly contend that another man's opinion ſhall be no rule to mine, and that my opinion ſhall be no ſnare and prejudice to myſelf, that men uſe one another ſo charitably and ſo gently, that no error or violence tempt men to hypocriſy; this very thing being one of the arguments I uſe to perſuade permiſſions, leſt compulſion introduce hypocriſy, and make ſincerity troubleſome and unſafe.

VI.

VI. If men would not call all Opinions by the name of Religion, and ſuper-ſtructures by the name of fundamental articles, and all fancies by the glorious appellative of faith, this objection would have no pretence or footing; ſo that it is the diſeaſe of the men, not any cauſe that is miniſtered by ſuch precepts of charity, that makes them perpetually clamorous: And it would be hard to ſay that ſuch phyſicians are incurious of their patients, and neglectful of their health, who ſpeak againſt the unreaſonableneſs of ſuch empericks, that would cut off a man's head, if they ſee but a wart upon his cheek, or a dimple upon his chin, or any lines in his face to diſtinguiſh him from another man; the caſe is altogether the ſame, and we may as well decree a wart to be mortal, as a various opinion in *re aliqui non neceſſariâ* to be capital and damnable.

For I conſider, that there are but few doctrines of chriſtianity, that were ordered to be preached to all the world, to every ſingle perſon, and made a neceſſary article of his explicit belief: Other doctrines, which are all of them not ſimply neceſſary, are either ſuch as are not clearly revealed, or ſuch as are: If they be clearly revealed, and that I know ſo too, or may but for my own fault, I am not to be excuſed, but for this I am to be left to God's judgment; unleſs my fault be externally ſuch as to be cognoſcible and puniſhable in human judicatory: But then, if it be not ſo revealed, but that wiſe men and good men differ in their opinions, it is a clear caſe, it

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is not *inter dogmata neceſſaria ſimpliciter*; and then it is certain I may therefore ſafely diſbelieve it, becauſe I may be ſafely ignorant of it. For if I may with innocence be ignorant, then to know it or believe it, is not ſimply obligatory; ignorance is abſolutely inconſiſtent with ſuch an obligation, becauſe it is deſtructive and a plain negative to its performance; and if I do my honeſt endeavour to underſtand it, and yet do not attain it, it is certain that is not obligatory to me ſo much as by accident; for no obligation can preſs the perſon of a man, if it be impoſſible: no man is bound to do more than his beſt; no man is bound to have an excellent underſtanding, or to be infallible, or to be wiſer than he can; for theſe are things that are not in his choice, and therefore not a matter of a law, nor ſubject to reward and puniſhment; ſo that where ignorance of the article is not a ſin, there diſbelieving it in the right ſenſe, or believing it in the wrong, is not breach of any duty, eſſentially or accidentally neceſſary, neither in the thing itſelf, nor to the perſon; that is, he is neither bound to the article, nor to any endeavours or antecedent acts of volition and choice; and that man who may ſafely be ignorant of the propoſition, is not tied at all to ſearch it out; and if not at all to ſearch it, then certainly not to find it: All the obligation we are capable of is, not to be malicious or voluntarily criminal in any kind; and then if by accident we find out a truth, we are obliged to believe it; and ſo will every wiſe or

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good man do; indeed he cannot do otherwise: But if he diſbelieve an article without malice, or deſign, or involuntarily, or unknowingly, it is contradiction to ſay it is a ſin to him, who might totally have been ignorant of it; for that he believes it in the wrong ſenſe, it is his ignorance, and it is impoſſible that where he hath heartily endeavoured to find out a truth, this endeavour ſhould make him guilty of a ſin, which would never have been laid to his charge, if he had taken no pains at all: His ignorance in this caſe is not a fault at all; poſſibly it might, if there had been no endeavour to have cured it.

So that there is wholly a miſtake in this propoſition: For true it is, there are ſome propoſitions, which if a man never hear of, they will not be required of him; and they who cannot read, might ſafely be ignorant, that *Melchizedeck* was king of *Salem*; but he who reads it in the ſcripture, may not ſafely contradict it; although before that knowledge did arrive to him, he might ſafely have been ignorant of it: But this although it be true, is not pertinent to our queſtion; for *in ſenſu diviſo* this is true, that which at one time a man may be ignorant of, at ſome other time he may not diſbelieve: But *in ſenſu conjuncto* it is falſe; for at what time, and in what circumſtance ſoever it is no ſin to be ignorant, at that time and in that conjuncture, it is no ſin to diſbelieve; and ſuch is the nature of all queſtions diſputable, which are therefore not required of us to be believed in any one particular

cular ſenſe, becauſe the nature of the thing is ſuch as not to be neceſſary to be known at all ſimply and abſolutely, and ſuch is the ambiguity and cloud of its face and repreſentment, as not to be neceſſary ſo much as by accident, and therefore not to the particular ſenſe of any one perſon.

And yet, ſuch is the iniquity of men, that they ſuck in opinions as wild aſſes do the wind, without diſtinguiſhing the wholeſome from the corrupted air, and then live upon it at a venture, and when all their confidence is built upon zeal and miſtake, yet therefore becauſe they are zealous and miſtaken, they are impatient of contradiction.

But beſides that againſt this I have laid prejudice enough from the dictates of holy ſcripture, it is obſervable that this with its appendant degrees, I mean reſtraint of propheſying, impoſing upon other mens underſtanding, being maſters of their conſciences, and lording it over their faith, came in with the retinue and train of antichriſt, this is, they came as other abuſes and corruptions of the church did, by reaſon of the iniquity of the times, and the cooling of the firſt heats of chriſtianity, and the encreaſe of intereſt, and the abatements of chriſtian ſimplicity, when the church's fortune grew better, and her ſons grew worſe, and ſome of her fathers worſt of all; for in the firſt three hundred years there was no ſign of perſecuting any man for his opinion, though at that time there were very horrid opinions commenced, and ſuch which were exemplary

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and parallel enough to determine this queſtion; for they then were aſſaulted by new ſects, which deſtroyed the common principles of nature, of chriſtianity, of innocence and publick ſociety; and they who uſed all the means chriſtian and ſpiritual for their diſ-improvement and conviction, thought not of uſing corporal force, otherwiſe than by blaming ſuch proceedings: And therefore I do not only urge their not doing it as an argument of the unlawfulneſs of ſuch proceeding, but their defying it and ſpeaking againſt ſuch practices, as unreaſonable and deſtructive of chriſtianity: For ſo * *Tertullian* is expreſs, *Humani juris & naturalis poteſtatis, unicuique quod putaverit colere, ſed nec religionis eſt cogere religionem, quæ ſuſcipi debet ſponte non vi:* The ſame is the doctrine of St. *Cyprian*, *Lactantius*, St. *Hilary*, *Minutius Felix*, *Sulpitius Severus*, St. *Chryſoſtom*, St. *Hierom*, St. *Auſtin*, *Damaſcen*, *Theophylact*, *Socrates Scholaſticus*, and St. *Bernard*, as they are ſeverally referred to and urged upon occaſion in the following diſcourſe.

To which I add, that all wiſe princes, till they were overborn with faction or ſollicited by peeviſh perſons, gave toleration to differing ſects, whoſe opinions did not diſturb the publick intereſt: But at firſt, there were ſome heretical perſons that were alſo impatient of an adverſary, and they were the men who at firſt entreated the Emperors to perſecute the catholicks; but till four hundred years after

* Ad Scapulat.

Chriſt,

Chriſt, no catholick perſons, or very few, did provoke the ſecular arm, or implore its aid againſt the hereticks, ſave only that *Arrius* behaved himſelf ſo ſeditiouſly and tumultuarily, that the *Nicene* fathers procured a temporary decree for his relegation, but it was ſoon taken off and God left to be his judge, who indeed did it to ſome purpoſe, when he was truſted with it, and the matter wholly left to him.

But as the ages grew worſe, ſo men grew more cruel and unchriſtian, and in the Greek church *Atticus*, and *Neſtorius* of *Conſtantinople*, *Theodoſius* of *Synada*, and ſome few others who had forgotten the mercies of their great maſter, and their own duty, grew implacable and furious and impatient of contradiction. It was a bold and an arrogant ſpeech which *Neſtorius* made in his ſermon before *Theodoſius* the younger, *Da mihi, O Imperator, terram ab hæreticis repurgatam, & ego tibi viciſſim cælum dabo: Diſperde mecum hæreticos, & ego tecum diſperdam Perſas:* It was as groundleſs and unwarrantable, as it was bloody and inhuman.

And we ſee the contrary events prove truer, than this groundleſs and unlearned promiſe; for *Theodoſius* and *Valentinian* were proſperous princes, and have to all ages a precious memory, and the reputation of a great piety; but they were ſo far from doing what *Neſtorius* had ſuggeſted, that they reſtrained him from his violence and immanity, and *Theodoſius* did highly commend the good biſhop *Proclus* for his ſweetneſs of deportment towards erring

perſons, far above the cruelty of his predeceſſor *Atticus*: And the experience which Chriſtendom hath had in this laſt age is argument enough, that toleration of differing opinions is ſo far from diſturbing the publick peace, or deſtroying the intereſt of princes and commonwealths, that it does advantage to the publick, it ſecures peace, becauſe there is not ſo much as the pretence of religion left to ſuch perſons to contend for it, being already indulged to them. When *France* fought againſt the *Huguonots*, the ſpilling of her own blood was argument enough of the imprudence of that way of promoting religion; but ever ſince ſhe hath given permiſſion to them, the world is witneſs how proſperous ſhe hath been: But the great inſtance is in the differing temper, government and ſucceſs which *Margaret* of *Parma*, and the duke of *Alva* had: The clemency of the firſt had almoſt extinguiſhed the flame; but when ſhe was removed D'*Alva* ſucceeded and managed the matter of religion with fire and ſword; he made the flame ſo great, that his religion and his prince too have both been almoſt quite turned out of the country. *Pelli e medio ſapientiam, quoties vi res agitur,* ſays *Ennius*; and therefore the beſt of men, and the moſt glorious of princes were always ready to give toleration, but never to make executions for matters diſputable: *Euſebius* in his ſecond book of the life of *Conſtantine* reports theſe words of the *Emperor*, *Parem cum fidelibus ii qui errant, pacis & quietis fruitionem gaudentes accipiant: Ipſa ſiquidem communicationi*

communicationis & ſocietatis reſtitutio ad rectam etiam veritatis viam perducere poteſt. Nemo cuiquam moleſtus ſit; quiſque quod animo deſtinat, hoc etiam faciat.

And indeed there is great reaſon for princes to give toleration to diſagreeing perſons, whoſe opinions by fair means cannot be altered; for if the perſons be confident, they will ſerve God according to their perſuaſions; and if they be publickly prohibited, they will privately convene; and then all thoſe inconveniences and miſchiefs which are arguments againſt the permiſſion of conventicles, are arguments for the publick permiſſions of differing religions, becauſe the denying of the publick worſhip will certainly produce private conventicles, againſt which all wiſe princes and common-wealths have upon great reaſons made edicts and ſevere ſanctions, *Quicquid enim agitur abſente rege, in caput ejus plerunque redundat*, ſay the politiques: for the face of a man is as the face of a lion, and ſcatters all baſe machinations which breathe not but in the dark: It is a proverbial ſaying, *Quod nimia familiaritas ſervorum eſt conſpiratio adverſus dominum*; and they who for their ſecurity run into grots and cellars, and retirements, think that they being upon the defenſive, thoſe princes and thoſe laws that drive them to it are their enemies; and therefore they cannot be ſecure, unleſs the power of the one, and the obligation of the other be leſſened and reſcinded; and then the being reſtrained and made miſerable, endears the diſcontented perſons mutually, and makes

more hearty and dangerous confederations. King *James* of bleſſed memory, in his letters to the ſtates of the United Provinces, dated 6 *March*, 1613, thus wrote..... *Magis autem è re fore ſi ſopiantur authoritate publicâ, ita ut prohibeatis miniſtros veſtros, ne eas diſputationes in ſuggeſtum aut ad plebem ferant; ac diſtricte imperetis, ut pacem colant ſe invicem Tolerando in iſta opinionum ac ſententiarum diſcrepantia:* .....*Eoque juſtius videmur vobis hoc ipſum ſuadere debere quod neutram comperimus adeo deviam ut non poſſint & cum fidei Chriſtianæ veritate, & cum animarum ſalute conſiſtere, &c.* The like counſel in the diviſions of *Germany*, at the firſt reformation was thought reaſonable by the Emperor *Ferdinand*, and his excellent ſon *Maximilian*; for they had obſerved that violence did exaſperate, was unbleſſed, unſucceſsful, and unreaſonable, and therefore they made decrees of toleration, and appointed tempers and expedients to be drawn up by diſcreet perſons, and *George Caſſander* was deſigned to this great work, and did ſomething towards it: And *Emanuel Philibert*, Duke of *Savoy* repenting of his war undertaken for religion againſt the *Pedemontans*, promiſed them toleration, and was as good as his word: As much is done by the nobility of *Polonia*. So that the beſt princes and the beſt biſhops gave toleration and impunities; but it is known that the firſt perſecutions of diſagreeing perſons were by the *Arrians*, by the *Circumcellians* and *Donatiſts*; and from them, they of the church took example, who in ſmall

numbers did ſometime perſuade it, ſometime practice it. And among the Greeks it became not a publick and authoriſed practice, till the queſtion of images grew hot and high; for then the worſhippers of images having taken their example from the Empreſs *Irene*, who put her ſons eyes out for making an edict againſt images, began to be as cruel as they were deceived, eſpecially being encouraged by the Popes of *Rome*, who then blowed up the coals to ſome purpoſe.

And that I may upon this occaſion give account of this affair in the church of *Rome*; it is remarkable, that till the time of *Juſtinian* the emperor, *A. D.* 525. the catholicks and *Novatians* had churches indifferently permitted even in *Rome* itſelf; but the biſhops of *Rome* whoſe intereſt was much concerned in it, ſpoke much againſt it, and laboured the eradication of the *Novatians*: and at laſt when they got power into their hands, they ſerved them accordingly, but it is obſerved by *Socrates*, that when the firſt perſecution was made againſt them at *Rome* by Pope *Innocent* I. at the ſame inſtant the *Goths* invaded *Italy*, and became lords of all; it being juſt in God to bring a perſecution upon them for true belief, who with an incompetent authority and inſufficient grounds do perſecute an error leſs material, in perſons agreeing with them in the profeſſion of the ſame common faith. And I have heard it obſerved as a bleſſing upon St. *Auſtin*, (who was ſo merciful to erring perſons, as, the greateſt part of his life in all ſenſes, even when

he had twice changed his mind, yet to tolerate them, and never to endure they ſhould be given over to the ſecular power to be killed) that the very night the *Vandals* ſet down before his city of *Hippo* to beſiege it, he died and went to God, being (as a reward of his merciful doctrine) taken from the miſeries to come; and yet that very thing was alſo a particular iſſue of the divine providence upon that city, who not long before had altered their profeſſion into truth by force, and now were falling into their power, who afterward by a greater force turned them to be *Arrians*.

But in the church of *Rome*, the Popes were the firſt preachers of force and violence in matters of opinion; and that ſo zealouſly, that Pope *Vigilius* ſuffered himſelf to be impriſoned and handled roughly by the Emperor *Juſtinian*, rather than he would conſent to the reſtitution and peace of certain diſagreeing perſons; but as yet it came not ſo far as death. The firſt that preached that doctrine was *Dominick*, the founder of the begging orders of friers, the friers preachers; in memory of which the inquiſition is intruſted only to the friers of his order: and if there be any force in dreams, or truth in legends (as there is not much in either) this very thing might be ſignified by his mother's dream, who the night before *Dominick* was born, dreamed ſhe was brought to bed of a huge dog with a fire-brand in his mouth: Sure enough, however his diſciples expound the dream, it was a better ſign that he ſhould prove a rabid, furious incendiary, than

any

any thing elſe? whatever he might be in the other parts of his life, in this doctrine he was not much better, as appears in his deportment toward the *Albigenſes*, againſt whom he ſo preached, *adeo quidem ut centum hæreticorum millia ab octo millibus Catholicorum fuſa & interfecta fuiſſe perhibeantur*, ſaith one of him; and of thoſe who were taken 180 were burnt to death, becauſe they would not abjure their doctrine: This was the firſt example of putting erring perſons to death, that I find in the Roman church; for about 170 years before, *Berengarius* * fell into opinion concerning the bleſſed ſacrament, which they called hereſy, and recanted, and relapſed, and recanted again, and fell again two or three times, ſays *Gerſon* writing againſt *Romant* of the *Roſe*, and yet he died *ſicca morte*, his own natural death, and with hope of heaven; and yet *Hildebrand* was once his judge, which ſhews that at that time *Rome* was not come to ſo great heights of bloodſhed. In *England*, although the Pope had as great power here as any where, yet there were no executions for matter of opinion known till the time of *Henry* the fourth, who (becauſe he uſurped the crown) was willing by all means to endear the clergy by deſtroying their enemies, that ſo he might be ſure of them to all his purpoſes. And indeed, it may become them well enough, who

* B. Bruno Berengarianos e ſua dioceſi expulit, non morti aut ſuppliciis corporalibus tradidit.

are wiſer in their generation than the children of light, it may poſſibly ſerve the policies of evil perſons, but never the pure and chaſte deſigns of chriſtianity, which admits no blood but Chriſt's, and the imitating blood of martyrs, but knows nothing how to ſerve her ends, by perſecuting any of her erring children.

By this time I hope it will not be thought reaſonable to ſay, he that teaches mercy to erring perſons, teaches indifferency in religion; unleſs ſo many fathers, and ſo many churches, and the beſt of Emperors, and all the world (till they were abuſed by tyranny, popery, and faction) did teach indifferency; for I have ſhewn that chriſtianity does not puniſh corporally perſons erring ſpiritually, but indeed popery does; the *Donatiſts*, and *Circumcellians*, and *Arrians*, and the *Itaciani*, they of old did: In the middle ages, the patrons of images did, and the papiſts at this day do, and have done, ever ſince they were taught it by their St. *Dominick*.

VII. And yet after all this, I have ſomething more to exempt myſelf from the clamour of this objection: for let all errors be as much and as zealouſly ſuppreſſed as may be, (the doctrine of the following diſcourſe contradicts not that) but let it be done by ſuch means as are proper inſtruments of their ſuppreſſion, by preaching and diſputation (ſo that neither of them breed diſturbance) by charity and ſweetneſs, by holineſs of life, aſſiduity of exhortation, by the word of God and prayer.

For

For these ways are most natural, most prudent, most peaceable, and effectual. Only let not men be hasty in calling every disliked opinion by the name of heresy; and when they have resolved, that they will call it so, let them use the erring person like a brother, not beat him like a dog, or convince him with a gibbet, or vex him out of his understanding and persuasions.

And now if men will still say, I persuade to indifferency, there is no help for me, for I have given reasons against it, I must bear it as well as I can, I am not yet without remedy as they are, for patience will help me, and reason will not cure them, let them take their course, and I will take mine.

Only I will take leave to consider this (and they would do well to do so too) that unless faith be kept within its own latitude, and not called out to patronize every less necessary opinion, and the interest of every sect, or peevish person; and if damnation be pronounced against christians believing the creed, and living good lives, because they are deceived, or are said to be deceived, in some opinions less necessary, there is no way in the world to satisfy unlearned persons in the choice of their religion, or to appease the unquietness of a scrupulous conscience: For suppose an honest citizen, whose employment and parts will not enable him to judge the disputes and arguings of great clerks, see factions commenced and managed with much bitterness by persons who might

might on either hand be fit enough to guide him; when if he follow either, he is diſquieted and pronounced damned by the other (who alſo if he be the moſt unreaſonable in his opinion will perhaps be more furious in his ſentence) what ſhall this man do? where ſhall he reſt the ſole of his foot? Upon the doctrine of the church where he lives? Well; but that he hears declaimed againſt perpetually, and other churches claim highly and pretend fairly for truth, and condemn his church: If I tell him, that he muſt live a good life, and believe the creed, and not trouble himſelf with their diſputes, or intereſt himſelf in ſects and factions, I ſpeak reaſon: becauſe no law of God ties him to believe more than what is of eſſential neceſſity, and whatſoever he ſhall come to know to be revealed by God: Now if he believe his creed, he believes all that is neceſſary to all, or of itſelf; and if he do his moral endeavour beſide, he can do no more toward finding out all the reſt, and then he is ſecured; but then if this will ſecure him, why do men preſs further, and pretend every opinion as neceſſary, and that in ſo high degree, that if they all ſaid true, or any two indeed of them, in 500 ſects which are in the world (and for aught I know there may be 5000) it is 500 to one but that every man is damned; for every ſect damns all but itſelf, and that is damned of 499, and it is excellent fortune then if that eſcape; and there is the ſame reaſon in every one of them, that is, it is extreme un-

unreaſonableneſs in all of them to pronounce damnation againſt ſuch perſons, againſt whom clearly and dogmatically holy ſcripture hath not; *In odioſis quod minimum eſt ſequimur, in favoribus quod eſt maximum*, ſaith the law; and therefore we ſhould ſay any thing, or make any excuſe which is in any degree reaſonable, rather than condemn all the world to hell; eſpecially if we conſider theſe two things; that we ourſelves are as apt to be deceived as any are, and that they who are deceived, when they uſed their moral induſtry that they might not be deceived, if they periſh for this, they periſh for what they could not help.

But however, if the beſt ſecurity in the world be not in neglecting all ſects, and ſubdiviſions of men, and fixing ourſelves on points neceſſary and plain; and on honeſt and pious endeavours, according to our ſeveral capacities and opportunities for all the reſt; if, I ſay, all this be not through the mercies of God, the beſt ſecurity to all unlearned perſons, and learned too, where ſhall we fix, where ſhall we either have peace or ſecurity? If you bid me follow your doctrine, you muſt tell me why, and perhaps when you have, I am not able to judge; or if I be as able as other people are, yet when I have judged, I may be deceived too, and ſo may you, or any man elſe you bid me follow, ſo that I am no whit the nearer truth or peace.

And

And then if we look abroad, and conſider how there is ſcarce any church, but is highly charged by many adverſaries in many things, poſſibly we may ſee a reaſon to charge every one of them in ſome things; and what ſhall we do then? The church of *Rome* hath ſpots enow, and all the world is inquiſitive enough to find out more, and to repreſent theſe to her greateſt diſadvantage. The Greek church denies the proceſſion of the holy ghoſt from the ſon; if that be falſe doctrine, ſhe is highly to blame; if it be not, then all the weſtern churches are to blame, for ſaying the contrary: And there is no church that is in proſperity, but alters her doctrine every age, either by bringing in new doctrines, or by contradicting her old; which ſhews that none are ſatisfied with themſelves, or with their own confeſſions: And ſince all churches believe themſelves fallible, that only excepted which all other churches ſay is moſt of all deceived, it were ſtrange if, in ſo many articles which make up their ſeveral bodies of confeſſions, they had not miſtaken every one of them in ſomething or other: The *Lutheran* churches maintain conſubſtantiation, the *Zuinglians* are ſacramentaries, the *Calviniſts* are fierce in the matters of abſolute predetermination, and all theſe reject epiſcopacy, which the primitive church would have made no doubt to have called hereſy: The *Socinians* profeſs a portentous number of ſtrange opinions; they deny the holy trinity, and the ſatisfaction of our bleſſed ſaviour:

ſaviour: The *Anabaptiſts* laugh at pædo-baptiſm; the *Ethiopian* churches are *Neſtorian*: where then ſhall we fix our confidence, or join communion? to pitch upon any one of theſe is to throw the dice, if ſalvation be to be had only in one of them, and that every error which by chance hath made a ſect, and is diſtinguiſhed by a name, be dammable.

If this conſideration do not deceive me, we have no other help in the midſt of theſe diſtractions, and diſ-unions, but all of us to be united in that common term, which as it conſtitutes the church, in its being ſuch, ſo it is the medium of the communion of ſaints, and that is the *Creed of the Apoſtles*, and in all other things an honeſt endeavour to find out what ‡ truths we can, and a charitable and mutal permiſſion to others that diſagree from us and our opinions. I am ſure this may ſatisfy us, for it will ſecure us, but I know not any thing elſe that will: and no man can be ſo reaſonably perſuaded, or ſatisfied in any thing elſe, unleſs he throw himſelf upon chance, or abſolute predeſtination, or his own confidence; in every one of which it is two to one at leaſt but he may miſcarry.

Thus far I thought I had reaſon on my ſide; and I ſuppoſe I have made it good upon

‡ Clem. Alex. ſtromat. 1. ait Philoſophiam liberam eſſe, præſtantiſſimam, quæ ſcil. verſatur in perſpicaciter ſeligendis dogmatis omnium Sectarum. Polemo Alexandrinus ſic primus philoſophatus eſt, ut ait Laertius in Proœmio, unde cognominatus eſt, ἐκλεκτικὸς, ſcil. τὰ κρείττονα ἐξ ἑκάστης αἱρέσεως.

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its proper grounds, in the pages following. But then if the reſult be, that men muſt be permitted in their opinions, and that chriſtians muſt not perſecute chriſtians; I have alſo as much reaſon to reprove all thoſe oblique arts which are not direct perſecutions of mens' perſons, but are indirect proceedings, ungentle and unchriſtian, ſervants of faction and intereſt, provocations to zeal and animoſities, and deſtructive of learning and ingenuity. And theſe are ſuppreſſing all the monuments of their adverſaries, forcing them to recant, and burning their books.

For it is a ſtrange induſtry, and an importune diligence that was uſed by our forefathers; and of all thoſe hereſies which gave them battle and employment, we have abſolutely no record or monument, but what themſelves who were adverſaries have tranſmitted to us; and we know that adverſaries, eſpecially ſuch who obſerved all opportunities to diſcredit both the perſons and doctrines of the enemy, are not always the beſt records or witneſſes of ſuch tranſactions. We ſee it now in this very age, in the preſent diſtemperatures, that parties are no good regiſters of the actions of the adverſe ſide: And if we cannot be confident of the truth of a ſtory now, now I ſay that it is poſſible for any man, and likely that an intereſted adverſary will diſcover the impoſture, it is far more unlikely, that after ages ſhould know any other truth, but ſuch as ſerves the ends of the repreſenters: I am ſure

ſuch

ſuch things were never taught us by Chriſt and his apoſtles; and if we were ſure that ourſelves ſpoke truth, or that truth were able to juſtify herſelf, it were better if to preſerve a doctrine we did not deſtroy a commandment, and out of zeal pretending to chriſtian religion, loſe the glories and rewards of ingenuity and chriſtian ſimplicity.

Of the ſame conſideration is mending of authors, not to their own mind but to ours, that is to mend them ſo as to ſpoil them; forbidding the publication of books, in which there is nothing impious, or againſt the public intereſt, leaving out clauſes in tranſlations, diſgracing mens' perſons, charging diſavowed doctrines upon men, and the perſons of the men with the conſequents of their doctrine, which they deny either to be true or to be conſequent, falſe reporting of diſputations and conferences, burning books by the hand of the hangman, and all ſuch arts, which ſhew that we either diſtruſt God for the maintenance of his truth, or that we diſtruſt the cauſe, or diſtruſt ourſelves and our abilities: I will ſay no more of theſe, but only concerning the laſt, I ſhall tranſcribe a paſſage out of *Tacitus* in the life of *Julius Agricola*, who gives this account of it, *Veniam non petiſſem niſi incurſaturus tam ſæva et infeſta virtutibus tempora. Legimus cum Aruleno Ruſtico Pætus Thraſea, Herennio Senecioni Priſcus Helvidius laudati eſſent, capitale fuiſſe, neque in ipſos modo authores, ſed in*

libros

libros quoque eorum ſævitum delegato Triumviris miniſterio ut monumenta clariſſimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac foro urerentur, ſcil. *illo igne vocem populi Rom. & libertatem Senatus & conſcientiam generis humani aboleri arbitrabantur, expulſis inſuper ſapientiæ profeſſoribus, atque omni bona arte in exilium acta, ne quid uſquam honeſtum occurreret.* It is but an illiterate policy to think that ſuch indirect and uningenuous proceedings can amongſt wiſe and free men diſgrace the authors, and diſrepute their diſcourſes; and I have ſeen that the price hath been trebled upon a forbidden or a condemned book; and ſome men in policy have got a prohibition, that their impreſſion might be the more certainly vendible, and the author himſelf thought conſiderable.

The beſt way is to leave tricks and devices, and to fall upon that way which the beſt ages of the church uſed: with the ſtrength of argument, and allegations of ſcripture, and modeſty of deportment, and meekneſs, and charity to the perſons of men, they converted miſbelievers, ſtopped the mouths of adverſaries, aſſerted truth, and diſcountenanced error; and thoſe other ſtratagems and arts of ſupport and maintenance to doctrines, were the iſſues of heretical brains; the old catholicks had nothing to ſecure themſelves but the ἐν μεγα of truth and plain dealing.

‹ *Fidem*

" * *Fidem minutis diſſecant ambagibus,*
" *Ut quiſque linguâ eſt nequior.*
" *Solvunt ligantque quæſtionum vincula*
" *Per ſyllogiſmos plectiles.*
" *Væ captioſis Sycophantarum ſtrophis,*
" *Væ verſipelli aſtutiæ.*
" *Nodos tenaces recta rumpit regula,*
" *Infeſta diſcertantibus:*
" *Idcirco mundi ſtulta deligit Deus,*
" *Ut concidant Sophiſtica.*

And to my underſtanding, it is a plain art and deſign of the devil, to make us ſo in love with our own opinions, as to call them faith and religion, that we may be proud in our underſtanding; and beſides, that, by our zeal in our opinions, we grow cool in our piety and practical duties, he alſo by this earneſt contention does directly deſtroy good life, by engagement of zealots to do any thing rather than be overcome, and loſe their beloved propoſitions: but I would fain know why is not any vicious habit as bad or worſe than a falſe opinion? Why are we ſo zealous againſt thoſe we call hereticks, and yet great friends with drunkards, and fornicators, and ſwearers, and intemperate and idle perſons? Is it becauſe we are commanded by the apoſtle to reject a heretick after two admonitions, and not to bid ſuch a one *God ſpeed*? It is a good reaſon why we ſhould be zealous againſt ſuch perſons,

* Prudent. apotheoſ. hym. in infidel.

provided we miſtake them not. For thoſe of whom theſe apoſtles ſpeak, are ſuch as deny Chriſt to be come in the fleſh, ſuch as deny an article of Creed; and in ſuch odious things, it is not ſafe nor charitable to extend the *gravamen* and puniſhment beyond the inſtances the apoſtles make, or their exact parallels. But then alſo, it would be remembered that the apoſtles ſpeak as ſtoutly againſt communion with fornicators, and all diſorders practical, as againſt communion with hereticks, *If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with ſuch a one no not to eat*: I am certain that a drunkard is as contrary to God, and lives as contrary to the laws of chriſtianity, as a heretick; and I am alſo ſure that I know what drunkeneſs is, but I am not ſure that ſuch an opinion is hereſy; neither would other men be ſo ſure as they think for, if they conſidered it aright, and obſerve the infinite deceptions, and cauſes of deceptions in wiſe men, and in moſt things, and in all doubtful queſtions; and that they did not miſtake confidence for certainty.

But indeed, I could not but ſmile at thoſe jolly Friars, two *Franciſcans*, who offered themſelves to the fire to prove *Savonarola* to be a heretick, but a certain * *Jacobine* offered himſelf to the fire to prove that *Savonarola* had true revelations, and was no heretick; in the mean

* Commin. l. 8. c. 19.

time

time *Savonarola* preached, but made no ſuch confident offer, nor durſt he venture at that new kind of fire ordeal; and put the caſe all four had paſt through the fire, and died in the flames, what would that have proved? Had he been a heretick or no heretick, the more or the leſs, for the confidence of theſe zealous idiots? If we mark it, a great many arguments whereon many ſects rely, are no better probation than this comes to. Confidence is the firſt, and the ſecond, and the third part of a very great many of their propoſitions.

But now, if men would a little turn the tables, and be as zealous for a good life, and all the ſtricteſt precepts of chriſtianity (which is a religion the moſt holy, the moſt reaſonable, and the moſt conſummate that ever was taught to man) as they are for ſuch propoſitions, in which neither the life, nor the ornament of chriſtianity is concerned; we ſhould find, that as a conſequent of this piety, men would be as careful as they could, to find out all truths, and the ſenſe of all revelations which may concern their duty; and where men were miſerable and could not, yet others that lived good lives too would alſo be ſo charitable, as not to add affliction to this miſery; and both of them are parts of good life, to be compaſſionate, and to help to bear one anothers burdens; not to deſtroy the weak, but to entertain him meekly, that's a precept of charity; and to endeavour to find out the whole will of God, that alſo is a part of the obedience,



the

the choice and the excellency of faith, and he lives not a good life, that does not do both theſe.

But men think they have more reaſon to be zealous againſt hereſy than againſt a vice in manners, becauſe hereſy is infectious and dangerous, and the principle of much evil: indeed if by a hereſy we mean that which is againſt an article of Creed, and breaks part of the covenant made between God and man by the mediation of Jeſus Chriſt; I grant it to be a very grievous crime, a calling God's veracity into queſtion, and a deſtruction alſo of good life; becauſe upon the articles of Creed, obedience is built, and it lives or dies, as the effect does by its proper cauſe; for faith is the moral cauſe of obedience: but then hereſy, that is, ſuch as this, is alſo a vice, and the perſon criminal, and ſo the ſin is to be eſteemed in its degrees of malignity; and let men be as zealous againſt it as they can, and employ the whole arſenal of the ſpiritual armour againſt it; ſuch as this, is worſe than adultery or murder, in as much as the ſoul is more noble than the body, and a falſe doctrine is of greater diſſemination and extent than a ſingle act of violence or impurity. Adultery or murder is a duel, but hereſy (truly and indeed ſuch) is an unlawful war, it ſlays thouſands: the loſing of faith is like digging down a foundation; all the ſuperſtructures of hope, and patience, and charity fall with it: and beſides this, hereſy of all crimes is the moſt inexcuſable

cuſable and of leaſt temptation; for true faith is moſt commonly kept with the leaſt trouble of any grace in the world; and hereſy of itſelf hath not only no pleaſure in it, but is a very puniſhment; becauſe faith as it oppoſes heretical or falſe opinions, and diſtinguiſhes from charity, conſiſts in mere acts of believing; which becauſe they are of true propoſitions, are natural and proportionable to the underſtanding, and more honourable than falſe. But then concerning thoſe things which men now adays call hereſy, they cannot be ſo formidable as they are repreſented; and if we conſider that drunkenneſs is certainly a damnable ſin, and that there are more drunkards than hereticks, and that drunkenneſs is parent of a thouſand vices; it may better be ſaid of this vice than of moſt of thoſe opinions which we call hereſies, it is infectious and dangerous, and the principle of much evil, and therefore as fit an object for a pious zeal to conteſt againſt, as is any of thoſe opinions which trouble mens eaſe or reputation; for that is the greateſt of their malignity.

But if we conſider that ſects are made, and opinions are called hereſies, upon intereſt, and the grounds of emolument; we ſhall ſee that a good life would cure much of this miſchief. For firſt, the church of *Rome*, which is the great dictatrix of dogmatical reſolutions, and the declarer of hereſy, and calls heretick more than all the world beſides, hath made That the rule of hereſy, which is the conſervatory of

intereſt, and the ends of men. For, to recede from the doctrine of the church, with them makes hereſy, that is, to diſpute their authority and not to obey them, not to be their ſubjects, not to give them the empire of our conſcience, is the great κριτηριον of hereſy.

So that with them, hereſy is to be eſteemed clearly by human ends, not by divine rules; that is formal hereſy which materially differs them; and it would make a ſuſpicious man a little inquiſitive into their particular doctrines; and when he finds that indulgences, and jubilies, and purgatories, and maſſes, and offices for the dead, are very profitable; that the doctrine of primacy, of infallibility, of ſuperiority over councils, of indirect power in temporals, are great inſtruments of ſecular honour; he would be apt to think, that if the church of *Rome* would learn to lay her honour at the feet of the crucifix, and deſpiſe the world, and prefer *Jeruſalem* before *Rome*, and heaven above the lateran; that theſe opinions would not have in them any native ſtrength to ſupport them, againſt the perpetual aſſaults of their adverſaries, who ſpeak ſo much reaſon and ſcripture againſt them. I have inſtanced in the Roman religion; but I wiſh it may be conſidered alſo, how far mens' doctrines in other ſects ſerve mens' temporal ends, ſo far that it would not be unreaſonable or unneceſſary to attempt to cure ſome of their diſtemperatures or miſperſuaſions by the ſalutary precepts of ſanctity and holy life: ſure enough,

if

if it did not more concern their reputation and their lasting interest to be counted true believers, rather than good livers, they would rather endeavour to live well, than to be accounted of a right opinion in things beside the Creed.

For my own particular, I cannot but expect, that God in his justice should enlarge the bounds of the Turkish empire, or some other way punish Christians, by reason of their pertinacious disputing about things unnecessary, undeterminable, and unprofitable; and for their hating and persecuting their brethren, who should be as dear to them as their own lives, for not consenting to one anothers' follies, and senseless vanities; how many volumes have been writ about angels, about immaculate conception, about original sin; when all that is solid reason or clear revelation, in all these three articles, may be reasonably enough comprized in forty lines! And in these trifles and impertinencies, men are curiously busy, while they neglect those glorious precepts of christianity and holy life, which are the glories of our religion, and would enable us to a happy eternity.

Thus far my thoughts have carried me; and then I thought I had reason to go further, and to examine the proper grounds upon which these persuasions might rely and stand firm, in case any body should contest against them: for possibly men may be angry at me and my design; for I do them all great displeasure,

who think no end is then well ſerved, when their intereſt is diſſerved; and but that I have writ ſo untowardly and heavily, that I am not worth a confutation, poſſibly ſome or other might be writing againſt me. But then I muſt tell them, I am prepared of an anſwer before-hand: for I think I have ſpoken reaſon in my book, and examined it with all the ſeverity I have; and if after all this I be deceived, this confirms me in my firſt opinion, and becomes a new argument to me, that I *have* ſpoken reaſon: for it furniſhes me with a new inſtance, that it is neceſſary, there ſhould be a mutual compliance and toleration; becauſe even then, when a man thinks he hath moſt reaſon to be confident, he may eaſily be deceived.

For I am ſure, I have no other deſign but the proſecution and advantage of truth; and I may truly uſe the words of *Gregory Nazianzen*, *Non ſtudemus paci in detrimentum veræ doctrinæ, ... ut facilitatis & manſuetudinis famam colligamus*: But I have writ this, becauſe I thought it was neceſſary and ſeaſonable, and charitable, and agreeable to the great precepts and deſign of chriſtianity, conſonant to the practice of the apoſtles, and of the beſt ages of the church, moſt agreeable to ſcripture and reaſon, to revelation and the nature of the thing; and it is ſuch a doctrine, that if there be variety in human affairs, if the event of things be not ſettled in a durable conſiſtence, but is changeable, every one of us all may

may have need of it. I ſhall only therefore deſire that they who will read it may come to the reading it with as much ſimplicity of purpoſes and unmixed deſires of truth, as I did to the writing it; and that no man trouble himſelf with me or my diſcourſe, who thinks before-hand that his opinion cannot be reaſonably altered. If he think me to be miſtaken before he try, let him alſo think that he may be miſtaken too; and that he who judges before he hears, is miſtaken though he give a right ſentence:

Οὐ κεκλιακέναι καὶ βοᾶν, πρὶν ἂν μάθῃς,*

Was good counſel: But at a venture, I ſhall leave this ſentence of *Solomon* to his conſideration, *A wiſe man feareth, and departeth from evil, but a fool rageth and is confident*, Παῦλα εἰδέναι βλέπεσθαι καὶ διϊσχυρίζεσθαι, is a trick of boys and bold young fellows, ſays *Ariſtotle*; but they who either know themſelves, or things, or perſons, προσιδέασιν ἀεὶ τὸ ἴσως, καὶ τὸ τάχα. Peradventure yea, peradventure no, is very often the wiſeſt determination of a queſtion: For there are μωροὶ καὶ ἀπαίδευτοι ζητήσεις (as the apoſtle notes) fooliſh and unlearned queſtions; and it were better to ſtop the current of ſuch fopperies by ſilence, than by diſputing them convey them to poſterity. And many things there are of more profit,

* Ariſtoph. in Pluto. † 2 Tim. 2.

which

which yet are of no more certainty; and therefore boldneſs of aſſertion (except it be in matters of faith and cleareſt revelation) is an argument of the vanity of the man, never of the truth of the propoſition; for to ſuch matters the ſaying of *Xenophanes* in *Varro*, is pertinent and applicable, *Humanius eſt haec opinari, Dei ſcire*; God only knows them, and we conjecture.

Μαντις ἀρ' ὁ γε ἐσθλος ἀνηρ ὃς τα πολλα νοησῃ.

And although I be as deſirous to know what I ſhould, and what I ſhould not, as any of my brethren the ſons of *Adam*; yet I find that the more I ſearch, the further I am from being ſatisfied; and make but few diſcoveries, ſave of my own ignorance; and therefore I am deſirous to follow the example of a very wiſe perſonage, *Julius Agricola*, of whom *Tacitus* gave this teſtimony, *Retinuitque (quod eſt difficillimum) ex ſcientia modum*: or that I may take my precedent from within the pale of the church, (it was the ſaying of St. *Auſtin*,) *Mallem quidem eorum quæ a me quæſiviſti habere ſcientiam quam ignorantiam, ſed quia id nondum potui, magis eligo cautam igorantiam confiteri, quam falſam ſcientiam profiteri*; and theſe words do very much expreſs my ſenſe. But if there be any man ſo confident as *Luther* ſometimes was, who ſaid that he could expound all ſcripture; or ſo vain as *Eckius*, who in his *Chryſopaſſus* ventured upon the higheſt

highest and most mysterious question of predestination, *ut in ea juvenales possit calores exercere*; such persons as these, or any who is furious in his opinion, will scorn me and my discourse; but I shall not be much moved at it, only I shall wish that I had as much knowledge as they think me to want, and they as much as they believe themselves to have. In the mean time, modesty were better for us both, and indeed for all men: For when men indeed are knowing, amongst other things they are able to separate certainties from uncertainties; if they be not knowing, it is pity that their ignorance should be triumphant, or discompose the publick peace, or private confidence.

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FREEDOM of THINKING

In Matters of Religion.

Introduction to Sect. I.

THE infinite variety of opinions in matters of religion, as they have troubled chriſtendom, with intereſts, factions, and partialities; ſo have they cauſed great diviſions of the heart, and variety of thoughts and deſigns among pious and prudent men. For they all, ſeeing the inconveniences which the diſunion of perſuaſions and opinions have produced directly or accidentally, have thought themſelves obliged to ſtop this inundation of miſchiefs, and have made attempts accordingly. But it hath happened to moſt of them, as to a miſtaken phyſician, who gives excellent phyſic but miſapplies it, and ſo miſſes of his cure; ſo have theſe men; their attempts have therefore been ineffectual; for they put their help to a wrong part, or they have endeavoured to cure the ſymptoms, and have let the diſeaſe alone till it ſeemed incurable. Some have endeavoured to re-unite theſe fractions by propounding ſuch a Guide which they were all bound to follow; hoping that the unity of a guide, would have perſuaded unity of minds; but who this guide ſhould be at laſt became ſuch a

queſtion, that it was made part of the fire that was to be quenched; ſo far was it from extinguiſhing any part of the flame. Others thought of a Rule, and this muſt be the means of union, or nothing could do it. But ſuppoſing all the world had been agreed of this rule, yet the Interpretation of it was ſo full of variety, that this alſo became part of the diſeaſe, for which the cure was pretended. All men reſolved upon this, that tho' they yet had not hit upon the right, yet ſome way muſt be thought upon to reconcile differences in opinion, thinking ſo long as this variety ſhould laſt, Chriſt's kingdom was not advanced, and the work of the goſpel went on but ſlowly: Few men in the mean time conſidered, that ſo long as men had ſuch variety of principles, ſuch ſeveral conſtitutions, educations, tempers, and diſtempers, hopes, intereſts, and weakneſſes, degrees of light, and degrees of underſtanding, it was impoſſible all ſhould be of one mind. And what is impoſſible to be done, is not neceſſary to be done: and therefore, although variety of opinions was impoſſible to be cured (and they who attempted it, did like him who claps his ſhoulder to the ground to ſtop an earthquake) yet the inconveniences ariſing from it might poſſibly be cured, not by uniting their Beliefs, that was to be deſpaired of, but by curing that which cauſed theſe miſchiefs, and accidental inconveniences of their diſagreeings. For although theſe inconveniences, which every man ſees and feels, were conſequent to this diverſity of perſuaſions, yet it was but accidentally and by chance, in as much as we ſee that in many things, and they of great concernment, men allow to themſelves and to each other a liberty of diſagreeing, and no hurt neither. And certainly if diverſity of opinions, were of itſelf the cauſe of miſchiefs, it would be

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ſo ever; that is, regularly and univerſally (but that we ſee it is not:) for there are diſputes in chriſtendom concerning matters of greater concernment than moſt of thoſe opinions that diſtinguiſh ſects, and make factions; and yet, *becauſe men are permitted to differ* in thoſe great matters, ſuch evils are not conſequent to ſuch differences, as are to the uncharitable managing of ſmaller and more inconſiderable queſtions. It is of greater conſequence to believe right in the queſtion of the validity or invalidity of a death-bed repentance, than to believe aright in the queſtion of purgatory; and the conſequences of the doctrine of predeſtination, are of a deeper, and more material conſideration, than the products of the belief of the lawfulneſs or unlawfulneſs of private maſſes; and yet theſe great concernments, where a liberty of propheſying in theſe queſtions hath been permitted, hath made no diſtinct communion, no ſects of chriſtians; and the others have, and ſo have theſe too, in thoſe places where they have peremptorily been determined on either ſide. Since then, if men are quiet and charitable in ſome diſagreeings, that then and there the inconvenience ceaſes, if they were ſo in all others where lawfully they might, (and they may in moſt,) chriſtendom would be no longer rent in pieces, but would be redintegrated in a new pentecoſt; and although the ſpirit of God did reſt upon us in divided tongues, yet ſo long as thoſe tongues were of fire not to kindle ſtrife, but to warm our affections, and inflame our charities, we ſhould find that this variety of opinions in ſeveral perſons, would be looked upon as an argument only of diverſity of operations, while the ſpirit is the ſame; and that another man believes not ſo well as I, is only an argument, that I have a better and a clearer illumination than he, that I have a

better gift than he, received a ſpecial grace and favour, and excell him in this, and am perhaps excelled by him in many more. And if we all impartially endeavour to find a truth, ſince this endeavour and ſearch only is in our power, that we ſhall find it being *ab extra*, a gift and an aſſiſtance extrinſical, I can ſee no reaſon why this pious endeavour to find our truth, ſhall not be of more force to unite us in the bonds of charity, than his miſery in miſſing it ſhall be to diſunite us. So that ſince a union of perſuaſion is impoſſible to be attained, if we would attempt the cure by ſuch remedies as are apt to enkindle and encreaſe charity, I am confident we might ſee a bleſſed peace would be the reward and crown of ſuch endeavours.

But men are now a-days, and indeed always have been, ſince the expiration of the firſt bleſſed ages of Chriſtianity, ſo in love with their own fancies and opinions, as to think faith and all chriſtendom is concerned in their ſupport and maintenance, and whoever is not ſo fond, and does not dandle them like themſelves, it grows up to a quarrel, which becauſe it is in *materia theologiæ*, is made a quarrel in religion, and God is intitled to it; and then if you are once thought an enemy to God, it is our duty to perſecute you even to death, we do God good ſervice in it; when if we ſhould examine the matter rightly, the queſtion is either in *materia non revelata*, or *minus evidenti*, or *non neceſſaria*, either it is not revealed, or not ſo clearly, but that wiſe and honeſt men may be of different minds, or elſe it is not of the foundation of faith, but a remote ſuper-ſtructure, or elſe of mere ſpeculation, or perhaps when all comes to all, it is a falſe opinion, or a matter of human intereſt, that we have ſo zealouſly contended for; for to one of theſe heads moſt of the diſputes of chriſ-

tendom may be reduced; ſo that I believe the preſent factions (or the moſt) are from the ſame cauſe which St. *Paul* obſerved in the *Corinthian* ſchiſm, *when there are diviſions among you, are ye not carnal?* It is not the differing opinions that is the cauſe of the preſent ruptures, but want of charity; it is not the variety of underſtandings, but the diſunion of wills and affections; it is not the ſeveral principles, but the ſeveral ends that cauſe our miſeries: Our opinions commence, and are upheld according as our turns are ſerved, and our intereſts are preſerved, and there is no cure for us, but piety and charity. A holy life will make our belief holy, if we conſult not humanity and its imperfections in the choice of our religion, but ſearch for truth without deſigns, ſave only of acquiring heaven, and then be as careful to preſerve charity, as we were to get a point of faith; I am much perſuaded we ſhould find out more truths by this means; or however (which is the main of all) we ſhall be ſecured though we miſs them; and then we are well enough.

For if it be evinced that one heaven ſhall hold men of ſeveral opinions, if the unity of faith be not deſtroyed by that which men call differing religions and if an unity of charity be the duty of us all, even towards perſons that are not perſuaded of every propoſition we believe, then I would fain know to what purpoſe are all thoſe ſtirs, and great noiſes in chriſtendom; thoſe names of faction, the ſeveral names of churches not diſtinguiſhed by the diviſion of kingdoms, *ut eccleſia ſequatur imperium*, which was the primitive rule * and canon, but diſtinguiſhed by names of ſects and men; theſe are all become inſtruments of hatred, thence come ſchiſms and parting of communions, and then perſecutions, and then

* Optat. lib. 3.

wars and rebellion, and then diſſolutions of all friendſhips and ſocieties. All theſe miſchiefs proceed not from this, that all men are not of one mind, for that is neither neceſſary nor poſſible, but that every opinion is made an article of faith, every article is a ground of a quarrel, every quarrel makes a faction, every faction is zealous, and all zeal pretends for God, and whatſoever is for God cannot be too much; we by this time are come to that paſs, we think we love not God except we hate our Brother, and we have not the virtue of religion, unleſs we perſecute all religions but our own; for luke-warmneſs is ſo odious to God and Man, that we proceeding furiouſly upon theſe miſtakes, by ſuppoſing we preſerve the body, we deſtroy the ſoul of religion, or by being zealous for faith, or which is all one, for that which we miſtake for faith, we are cold in charity, and ſo loſe the reward of both.

All theſe errors and miſchiefs muſt be diſcovered and cured, and that is the purpoſe of this diſcourſe.

SECTION I.

Of the nature of faith, and that its duty is compleated in believing the articles of the Apoſtles Creed.

I. FIRST then it is of great concernment to know the nature and integrity of faith: For there begins our firſt and great miſtake; for faith although it be of great excellency, yet when it is taken for a habit intellectual, it hath ſo little room and ſo narrow a capacity, that it cannot lodge thouſands of thoſe opinions which pretend to be of her family.

II. For although it be neceſſary for us to believe whatſoever we know to be revealed of God, and ſo every man does, that believes there is a God: yet it is not neceſſary, concerning many things, to know that God hath revealed them; that is, we may be ignorant of, or doubt concerning the propoſitions, and indifferently maintain either part, when the queſtion is not concerning God's veracity, but whether God hath ſaid ſo or no: That which is of the foundation of faith, that only is neceſſary; and the knowing or not knowing of that, the believing or diſ-believing it, is that only which in *genere credendorum*, is in immediate and neceſſary order to ſalvation or damnation.

III. Now all the reaſon and demonſtration of the world convinces us, that this foundation of faith, or the great adequate object of the faith that ſaves us, is that great myſteriouſneſs of chriſtianity which Chriſt taught us with ſo much diligence, for the credibility of which he wrought ſo many miracles; for the teſtimony of which the Apoſtles endured perſecutions; that which was a folly to the Gentiles, and a ſcandal to the Jews, this is that which is the object of a Chriſtian's faith: all other things are implicitly in the belief of the articles of God's veracity, and are not neceſſary in reſpect of the conſtitution of faith to be drawn out, but may there lie in the bowels of the great articles without danger to any thing or any perſon, unleſs ſome other accident or circumſtance makes them neceſſary: Now the great object which I ſpeak of, is *Jeſus Chriſt crucified*; *conſtitui enim apud vos nihil ſcire præter Jeſum Chriſtum et hunc crucifixum*; ſo ſaid St. *Paul* to the church of *Corinth*: This is the article upon the confeſſion of which Chriſt built his church, *viz.* only upon St. *Peter*'s creed, which was no more but this ſimple enun-

cition, * *We believe and are ſure that thou art Chriſt, the ſon of the living God*: And to this ſalvation particularly is promiſed, as in the caſe of *Martha's* creed, *John* 11. 27. To this the ſcripture gives the greateſt teſtimony, and to all them that confeſs it; † *For every ſpirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh is of God: And whoever confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is the ſon of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*: The believing this article is the end of writing the four goſpels; § *For all theſe things are written, that ye might believe, that Jeſus is the Chriſt the ſon of God*, and then that this is ſufficient follows, and that *believing*, viz. this article (for this was only inſtanced in) *ye might have life through his name*. This is that great article which in *genere credendarum*, is ſufficient diſpoſition to prepare a *Catechumen* to baptiſm, as appears in the caſe of the *Ethiopian* eunuch, whoſe creed was only this, *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the ſon of God*, and upon this confeſſion (ſaith the ſtory) they both went into the water, and the *Ethiop* was waſhed and became as white as ſnow.

IV. In theſe particular inſtances, there is no variety of articles, ſave only that in the annexes of the ſeveral expreſſions, ſuch things are expreſſed, as beſides that Chriſt is come, they tell from whence, and to what purpoſe: And whatſoever is expreſſed, or is to theſe purpoſes implyed, is made articulate and explicate, in the ſhort and admirable myſterious Creed of St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 10. 8. *This is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mauth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved*: This is the great and intire complexion of a chriſtian's faith, and ſince ſalvation is promiſed to the belief of this creed, either a ſnare is laid for us, with a

* Mat. 16. 19. † 1 John 4. 2, 15. § John 20. 31.

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purpoſe to deceive us, or elſe nothing is of prime and original neceſſity to be believed, but this, *Jeſus Chriſt our redeemer*; and all that which is the neceſſary parts, means, or main action of working this redemption for us, and the honour for him, is in the bowels and fold of the great article, and claims an explicit belief by the ſame reaſon that binds us to the belief of its firſt complexion, without which neither the thing could be acted, nor the propoſition underſtood.

V. For the act of believing propoſitions, is not for itſelf, but in order to certain ends; as ſermons are to good life and obedience; for (excepting that it acknowledges God's veracity, and ſo is a direct act of religion) believing a revealed propoſition, hath no excellency in itſelf, but in order to that end for which we are inſtructed in ſuch revelations. Now God's great purpoſe being to bring us to him by Jeſus Chriſt, Chriſt is our medium to God, obedience is the medium to Chriſt, and faith the medium to obedience, and therefore is to have its eſtimate in proportion to its proper end, and thoſe things are neceſſary, which neceſſarily promote the end, without which obedience cannot be encouraged or prudently enjoined: ſo that thoſe articles are neceſſary, that is, thoſe are fundamental points, upon which we build our obedience; and as the influence of the article is to the perſuaſion or engagement of obedience, ſo they have their degrees of neceſſity. Now all that Chriſt, when he preached, taught us to believe, and all that the apoſtles in their ſermons propound, all aim at this, that we ſhould acknowledge Chriſt for our lawgiver and our ſaviour; ſo that nothing can be neceſſary by a prime neceſſity to be believed explicitly, but ſuch things which are therefore parts of the great article, becauſe they either encourage our ſervices,

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or oblige them, ſuch as declare Chriſt's greatneſs in himſelf, or his goodneſs to us. So that although we muſt neither deny nor doubt of any thing, which we know our great maſter hath taught us: yet ſalvation is in ſpecial and by name annexed to the belief of thoſe articles only, which have in them the indearments of our ſervices, or the ſupport of our confidence, or the ſatisfaction of our hopes, ſuch as are; Jeſus Chriſt the Son of the living God, the crucifixion and reſurrection of Jeſus, forgiveneſs of ſins by his blood, reſurrection of the dead, and life eternal, becauſe theſe propoſitions qualify Chriſt for our ſaviour and our law-giver, the one to engage our ſervices, the other to endear them; for ſo much is neceſſary as will make us to be his ſervants, and his diſciples; and what can be required more? This only. Salvation is promis'd to the explicit belief of thoſe articles, and therefore thoſe only are neceſſary, and thoſe are ſufficient; but thus, to us in the formality of chriſtians, which is a formality ſuper-added to a former capacity, we before we are chriſtians are reaſonable creatures, and capable of a bleſſed eternity, and there is a creed which is the gentiles creed which is ſo ſuppoſed in the chriſtian creed, as it is ſuppoſed in a chriſtian to be a man, and that is, *oportet accedentem ad deum credere deum eſſe, & eſſe remuneratorem quærentium eum.*

VI. If any man will urge farther, that whatſoever is deducible from theſe articles by neceſſary conſequence, is neceſſary to be believed explicitly: I anſwer. It is true, if he ſees the deduction and coherence of the parts; but it is not certain that every man ſhall be able to deduce whatſoever is either immediately, or certainly deducible from theſe premiſes; and then ſince ſalvation is promiſed to the explicit belief of theſe, I ſee not how

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any man can juſtify the making the way to heaven narrower than Jeſus Chriſt hath made it, it being already ſo narrow, that there are few that find it.

VII. In the purſuance of this great truth, the apoſtles or the holy men, their cotemporaries and diſciples, compoſed a creed, to be a rule of faith to all chriſtians, as appears in *Irenæus*, * *Tertullian*, † *St. Cyprian*, § *St. Auſtin*, ‡ *Ruffinus*, and divers ‖ others; which creed unleſs it had contained all the intire object of faith, and the foundation of religion, it cannot be imagined to what purpoſe it ſhould ſerve: and that it was ſo eſteemed by the whole church of God in all ages, appears in this, that ſince faith is a neceſſary pre-diſpoſition to baptiſm in all perſons capable of the uſe of reaſon, all *Catechumens* in the latin church coming to baptiſm, were interrogated concerning their faith, and gave ſatisfaction in the recitation of this creed. And in the eaſt they profeſſed exactly the ſame faith, ſomething differing in words, but of the ſame matter, reaſon, deſign, and conſequence; and ſo they did at at *Jeruſalem*, ſo at *Aquileia*: This was that ορθη και αμωμητος πιστις, ην περ κηρυττει η αγια του θεου καθολικη και αποστολικη εκκλησια καθ' ενα τροπον καινισμον δεξαμενη. Theſe articles were, τα των αγιων αποστολων και των μετ' εκεινων διατριψαντων εν ταις αγιαις θεου εκκλησιαις δογματα. *L. 5. cod. de S. Trinit. & fid. cath. cum recta.* Now ſince the apoſtles and apoſtolical men and churches in theſe their ſymbols,

* Apol. contr. gent. c. 47. de veland. virg. c. 1.

† In expoſit. ſymbol.

§ Serm. 5. de tempore, cap. 2.

‡ In ſymbol. apud Cyprian.

‖ Omnes orthodoxi patres affirmant ſymbolum ab ipſis apoſtolis conditum, *Sext. Senenſis, lib. 2. bib. 5. vide Genebr. l. 3. de Trin.*

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did recite particular articles to a considerable number, and were so minute in their recitation, as to descend to circumstances, it is more than probable that they omitted nothing of necessity; and that these articles are not general principles, in the bosom of which many more articles equally necessary to be believed explicitly and more particular, are infolded; but that it is as minute an explication of those *prima credibilia* I before reckoned, as is necessary to salvation.

VIII. And therefore *Tertullian* calls the creed *regulam fidei, qua salva & forma ejus manente in suo ordine, possit in scriptura tractari & inquiri si quid videtur vel ambiguitate pendere vel obscuritate obumbrari. Cordis signaculum & nostræ militiæ Sacramentum*, S. *Ambrose* calls it, *lib.* 3. *de velandis virgin. Comprehensio fidei nostræ atque perfectio*, by S. *Austin*, Serm. 115. *Confessio, expositio, regula fidei*, generally by the ancients: The profession of this Creed was the exposition of that saying of St. *Peter*, συνειδησεως αγαθης επερωτημα εις Θεον, *The answer of a good conscience towards God.* For of the recitation and profession of this creed in baptism, it is that *Tertullian de resur. carnis* says, *Anima non lectione, sed responsione sancitur.* And of this was the prayer of *Hillary*, *lib.* 12. *de Trinit. Conserva hanc conscientiæ meæ vocem ut quod in regenerationis meæ symbolo baptizatus in patre, filio, spir. S. professus sum semper obtineam.* And according to the rule and reason of this discourse (that it may appear that the creed hath in it all articles *primo et per se*, primely and universally necessary) the creed is just such an explication of that faith which the apostles preached, *viz.* the creed which St. *Paul* recites, as contains in it all those things which entitle Christ to us in the capacities of our law-giver and our saviour, such as enable him to the great work of redemption, according

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to the predictions concerning him, and ſuch as engage and encourage our ſervices. For, taking out the article of Chriſt's deſcent into hell (which was not in the old creed, as appears in ſome of the copies I before referred to, in *Tertullian*, *Ruffinus*, and *Irenæus*; and indeed was omitted in all the confeſſions of the eaſtern churches, in the church of *Rome*, and in the *Nicene* creed, which by adoption came to be the creed of the catholick church) all other articles are ſuch as directly conſtitute the parts and work of our redemption, ſuch as clearly derive the honour to chriſt, and enable him with the capacities of our ſaviour and lord. The reſt engage our ſervices by propoſition of ſuch articles which are rather promiſes than propoſitions; and the whole creed, take it in any of the old forms, is but an analyſis of that which St. *Paul* calls the word of ſalvation, whereby we ſhall be ſaved, *viz.* that we confeſs Jeſus to be Lord, and that God raiſed him from the dead: by the firſt whereof he became our law-giver and our guardian; by the ſecond he was our ſaviour: the other things are but parts and main actions of thoſe two. Now what reaſon there in is the world that can inwrap any thing elſe within the foundation, that is, in the whole body of articles ſimply and inſeparably neceſſary, or in the prime original neceſſity of faith, I cannot poſſibly imagine. Theſe do the work, and therefore nothing can upon the true grounds of reaſon enlarge the neceſſity to the incloſure of other articles.

IX. Now if more were neceſſary than the articles of the creed, I demand why was it made the* characteriſtick note of a Chriſtian from a Heretick, or a Jew, or an Infidel? or to what

* Vide Iſidor. de Eccleſ. offic. lib. 1. cap. 20, Suidan. Turnebum. lib. 2. cap. 30. adverſ. venant. for. in exeg. ſymb. Feuardent. in Iren. lib. 1. c. 2.

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purpoſe was it compoſed? or if this was intended as ſufficient, did the apoſtles or thoſe churches which they founded, know any thing elſe to be neceſſary? If they did not, then either nothing more is neceſſary (I ſpeak of matters of mere belief) or they did not know all the will of the Lord, and ſo were unfit diſpenſers of the myſteries of the kingdom; or if they did know more was neceſſary, and yet would not inſert it, they did an act of publick notice, and conſigned it to all ages of the church to no purpoſe, unleſs to beguile credulous people by making them believe their faith was ſufficient, having tried it by that touch-ſtone apoſtolical, when there was no ſuch matter.

X. But if this was ſufficient to bring men to heaven then, why not now? If the apoſtles admitted all to their communion that believed this creed, why ſhall we exclude any that preſerve the ſame intire? why is not our faith in theſe articles of as much efficacy for bringing us to heaven, as it was in the churches apoſtolical? who had guides more infallible that might without error have taught them ſuperſtructures enough, if they had been neceſſary; and ſo they did: but that they did not inſert them into the creed, when they might have done it with as much certainty, as theſe articles, makes it clear to my underſtanding, that other things were not neceſſary, but theſe were; that whatever profit and advantages might come from other articles, yet theſe were ſufficient, and however certain perſons might accidentally be obliged to believe much more, yet this was the one and only foundation of faith upon which all perſons were to build their hopes of heaven; this was therefore neceſſary to be taught to all, becauſe of neceſſity to be believed by all: ſo that although other perſons might commit a delin-

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quency *in genere morum*, if they did not know or did not believe much more, becauſe they were obliged to further diſquiſitions in order to other ends, yet none of theſe who held the creed intire, could periſh for want of neceſſary faith, though poſſibly he might for ſupine negligence or affected ignorance, or ſome other fault which had influence upon his opinions, and his underſtanding, he having a new ſupervening obligation *ex accidente* to know and believe more.

Neither are we obliged to make theſe articles more particular and minute than the creed. For ſince the apoſtles and indeed our bleſſed Lord himſelf promiſed heaven to them who believed him to be the Chriſt that was to come into the world, and that he who believes in him, ſhould be a partaker of the reſurrection and life eternal, he will be as good as his word: yet becauſe this article was very general, and a complexion rather than a ſingle propoſition; the apoſtles and others our fathers in Chriſt did make it more explicit, and though they have ſaid no more than what lay entire and ready form'd in the boſom of the great article, yet they made their extracts, to great purpoſe, and abſolute ſufficiency, and therefore there needs no more deduction or remoter conſequences from the firſt great article, than the creed of the apoſtles. For although whatſoever is certainly deduced from any of theſe articles made already ſo explicit, is as certainly true, and as much to be believed as the article itſelf; becauſe *ex veris poſſunt nil niſi vera ſequi*, yet becauſe it is not certain that our deductions from them are certain, and what one calls evident, is ſo obſcure to another, that he believes it falſe; it is the beſt and only ſafe courſe to reſt in that explication the apoſtles have made, becauſe if any of theſe apoſtolical deductions were not demonſtrable evi-

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dently to follow from that great article to which ſalvation is promiſed, yet the authority of them who compiled the ſymbol, the plain deſcription of the articles from the words of ſcriptures, the evidence of reaſon demonſtrating theſe to be the whole foundation, are ſufficient upon great grounds of reaſon to aſcertain us; but if we go farther, beſides the eaſineſs of being deceived, we relying upon our own diſcourſes, (which though they may be true and then bind us to follow them, but yet no more than when they only ſeem trueſt,) yet they cannot make the thing certain to another, much leſs neceſſary in itſelf. And ſince God would not bind us upon pain of ſin and puniſhment, to make deductions ourſelves, much leſs would he bind us to follow another man's logick as an article of our faith; I ſay much leſs another man's; for on our own integrity (for we will certainly be true to ourſelves, and do our own buſineſs heartily) is as fit and proper to be employed as another man's ability. He cannot ſecure me that his ability is abſolute and the greateſt, but I can be more certain that my own purpoſe and fidelity to myſelf is ſuch. And ſince it is neceſſary to reſt ſomewhere, leſt we ſhould run to an infinity, it is beſt to reſt there where the apoſtles and the churches apoſtolical reſted; when not only they who are able to judge, but others who are not, are equally aſcertained of the certainty and of the ſufficiency of that explication.

XII. This I ſay, not that I believe it unlawful or unſafe for the church or any of the *antiſtites religionis*, or any wiſe man to extend his own creed to any thing which may certainly follow from any one of the articles; but I ſay, that no ſuch deduction is fit to be preſſed on others as an article of faith; and that every deduction which is ſo made, unleſs it be ſuch a thing as is at firſt evident to all, is

but

but ſufficient to make a human faith, nor can it amount to a divine, much leſs can be obligatory to bind a perſon of a differing perſuaſion to ſubſcribe under pain of loſing his faith, or being a heretick. For it is a demonſtration that nothing can be neceſſary to be believed under pain of damnation, but ſuch propoſitions, of which it is certain that God hath ſpoken and taught them to us, and of which it is certain that this is their ſenſe and purpoſe: For if the ſenſe be uncertain, we can no more be obliged to believe it in a certain ſenſe, than we are to believe it at all, if it were not certain that God delivered it. But if it be only certain that God ſpake it, and not certain to what ſenſe, our faith of it is to be as indeterminate as its ſenſe, and it can be no other in the nature of the thing, nor is it conſonant to God's juſtice to believe of him that he can or will require more. And this is of the nature of thoſe propoſitions which *Ariſtotle* calls θεσεις, to which without any farther probation, all wiſe men will give aſſent at its firſt publication. And therefore deductions inevident, from the evident and plain letter of faith, are as great receſſions from the obligation, as they are from the ſimplicity, and certainty of the article. And this I alſo affirm, although the church of any one denomination, or repreſented in a council, ſhall make the deduction or declaration. For unleſs Chriſt had promiſed his ſpirit to protect every particular church from all errors leſs material, unleſs he had promiſed an univerſal infallibility *etiam in minutioribus*, unleſs ſuper-ſtructures be of the ſame neceſſity with the foundation, and that God's ſpirit doth not only preſerve his church in the being of a church, but in a certainty of not ſaying any thing that is leſs certain; and that whether they will or no too; we may be bound to peace

and obedience, to ſilence and to charity, but have not a new article of faith made; and a new propoſition though conſequent (as 'tis ſaid) from an article of faith becomes not therefore a part of the faith, nor of abſolute neceſſity, * *Quid unquam aliud eccleſia conciliorum decretis enixa eſt, niſi ut quod antea ſimpliciter credebatur, hoc idem poſtea diligentius crederetur*, ſaid *Vincentius Lirinenſis*, whatſoever was of neceſſary belief before is ſo ſtill, and hath a new degree added by reaſon of a new light or a clear explication; but no propoſitions can be adopted into the foundation. The church hath power to intend our faith, but not to extend it; to make our belief more evident, but not more large and comprehenſive. For Chriſt and his Apoſtles concealed nothing that was neceſſary to the integrity of chriſtian faith, or ſalvation of our ſouls; Chriſt declared all the will of his father, and the Apoſtles were ſtewards and diſpenſers of the ſame myſteries, and were faithful in all the houſe, and therefore concealed nothing, but taught the whole doctrine of Chriſt; ſo they ſaid themſelves. And indeed if they did not teach all the doctrine of faith, an angel or a man might have taught us other things than what they taught, without deſerving an anathema, but not without deſerving a bleſſing for making up that faith intire which the Apoſtles left imperfect. Now if they taught all the whole body of faith, either the church in the following ages loſt part of the faith (and then where was their infallibility, and the effect of thoſe glorious promiſes to which ſhe pretends and hath certain title; for ſhe may as well introduce a falſhood as loſe a truth, it being as much promiſed to her that the Holy Ghoſt ſhall lead her into all truth, as that ſhe ſhall be preſerved from all errors; as

* Contra hæreſ. cap. 32.

appears,

appears, *Joh.* 16. 13.) Or if she retained all the faith which Christ and his Apostles consigned and taught, then no age can by declaring any point, make that be an article of faith which was not so in all ages of christianity before such declaration. And indeed if the * church by declaring an article can make that to be necessary, which before was not necessary, I do not see how it can stand with the charity of the church so to do (especially after so long experience she hath had that all men will not believe every such decision or explication) for by so doing she makes the narrow way to heaven narrower, and chalks out one path more to the devil than he had before, and yet the way was broad enough when it was at the narrowest. For before, differing persons might be saved in diversity of persuasions, and now after this declaration if they cannot, there is no other alteration made, but that some shall be damned, who before even in the same dispositions and belief should have been beatified persons. For therefore, it is well for the fathers of the primitive church that their errors were not discovered, for if they had been contested (for that would have been called discovery enough) † *vel errores emendassent, vel ab ecclesia ejecti fuissent.* But it is better as it was, they went to heaven by that good fortune, whereas otherwise they might have gone to the devil. And yet there were some errors, particularly that of St. *Cyprian* that was discovered, and he went to heaven, 'tis thought; possibly they might so too for all this pretence. But suppose it true, yet whether that declaration of an article,

* Vide Jacob Almain. in 3. Sent. d. 25. Q. Unic. Dub. 3. Patet ergo, quod nulla veritas est Catholica ex approbatione, Ecclesiæ vel papæ, *Gabr. Biel. in 3. Sent. Dist. 25. q. Unic. art. 3. Dub. 3. ad finem.*

† Bellar de laicis l. 3. c. 20. §. ad primam confirmationem.

of which with ſafety we either might have doubted or been ignorant, does more good, than the damning of thoſe many ſouls occaſionally, but yet certainly and fore-knowingly does hurt, I leave it to all wiſe and good men to determine. And yet beſides this, it cannot enter into my thoughts that it can poſſibly conſiſt with God's goodneſs, to put it into the power of man, ſo palpably and openly to alter the paths and inlets to heaven, and to ſtreighten his mercies, unleſs he had furniſhed theſe men with an infallible judgment and an infallible prudence, and a never failing charity, that they ſhould never do it but with great neceſſity, and with great truth, and without ends and human deſigns, of which I think no arguments can make us certain: What the primitive church hath done in this caſe, I ſhall afterwards conſider and give an account of it, but for the preſent, there is no inſecurity in ending there where the Apoſtles ended, in building where they built, in reſting where they left us, unleſs the ſame infallibility which they had, had ſtill continued, which I think I ſhall hereafter make evident it did not: And therefore thoſe extenſions of creed which were made in the firſt ages of the church, although for the matter they were moſt true; yet becauſe it was not certain that they ſhould be ſo, and they might have been otherwiſe, therefore they could not be in the ſame order of faith, nor in the ſame degrees of neceſſity to be believed with the articles apoſtolical; and therefore whether they did well or no in laying the ſame weight upon them, or whether they did lay the ſame weight or no, we will afterwards conſider.

XIII. But to return. I conſider that a foundation of faith cannot alter, unleſs a new building be to be made, the foundation is the ſame ſtill; and this foundation is no other but that which Chriſt

Chriſt and his Apoſtles laid, which doctrine is like himſelf, yeſterday and to day, and the ſame for ever: ſo that the articles of neceſſary belief to all (which are the only foundation) cannot be ſeveral in ſeveral ages, and to ſeveral perſons. Nay the ſentence and declaration of the church, cannot lay this foundation, or make any thing of the foundation, becauſe the church cannot lay her own foundation; we muſt ſuppoſe her to be a building, and that ſhe relies upon the foundation, which is therefore ſuppoſed to be laid before, becauſe ſhe is built upon it: or (to make it more explicate) becauſe a cloud may ariſe from the allegory of building and foundation, it is plainly thus; the church being a company of men obliged to the duties of faith and obedience, the duty and obligation being of the faculties of will and underſtanding to adhere to ſuch an object muſt pre-ſuppoſe the object made ready for them; for as the object is before the act in order of nature, and therefore not to be produced or encreaſed by the faculty (which is receptive, cannot be active upon its proper object:) So the object of the church's faith is in order of nature before the church, or before the act and habit of faith, and therefore cannot be enlarged by the church, any more than the viſive faculty can add viſibility to the object. So that if we have found out what foundation Chriſt and his Apoſtles did lay, that is what body and ſyſtem of articles ſimply neceſſary they taught and required of us to believe, we need not, we cannot go any further for foundation, we cannot enlarge that ſyſtem or collection. Now then, although all that they ſaid is true, and nothing of it to be doubted or diſ-believed, yet as all that they ſaid, is neither written nor deliver'd (becauſe all was not neceſſary) ſo we know that of thoſe things which are written, ſome things are

as far off from the foundation as thoſe things which were omitted, and therefore although now accidentally they muſt be believed by all that know them, yet it is not neceſſary all ſhould know them; and that all ſhould know them in the ſame ſenſe and interpretation, is neither probable nor obligatory; but therefore ſince theſe things are to be diſtinguiſhed by ſome differences of neceſſary and not neceſſary, whether or no is not the declaration of Chriſt's and his Apoſtles affixing ſalvation to the belief of ſome great comprehenſive articles, and the act of the Apoſtles rendering them as explicit as they thought convenient, and conſigning that creed made ſo explicit, as a teſſera of a chriſtian, as a comprehenſion of the articles of his belief, as a ſufficient diſpoſition and an expreſs of the faith of a *Catechumen* in order to baptiſm; whether or no I ſay, all this be not ſufficient probation that theſe only are of abſolute neceſſity, that this is ſufficient for meer belief in order to heaven, and that therefore whoſoever believes theſe articles heartily and explicitly, Θεος μενει εν αυτω. as St. *John*'s expreſſion is, *God dwelleth in him*, I leave it to be conſidered and judged of from the premiſes: Only this, if the old doctors had been made judges in theſe queſtions, they would have paſſed their affirmative; for to inſtance in one for all, of this it was ſaid by *Tertullian*, * *Regula quidem fidei una omnino eſt ſola immobilis & irreformabilis, &c. Hac lege fidei manente cetera jam diſciplinæ & converſationis admittunt novitatem correctionis, operante ſcil. & proficiente uſque in finem gratiâ dei.* This ſymbol is the one ſufficient immoveable unalterable and unchangeable rule of faith, that admits no increment or decrement; but if the integrity and

* Lib. de veland. Virg.

unity

unity of this be preſerved, in all other things men may take a liberty of enlarging their knowledges and propheſyings, according as they are aſſiſted by the grace of God.

SECTION II.

Of Hereſy and the Nature of it, and that it is to be accounted according to the ſtrict capacity of chriſtian faith, and not in opinions ſpeculative, nor ever to pious perſons.

I. AND thus I have repreſented a ſhort draught of the object of faith, and its foundation; the next conſideration in order to our main deſign, is to conſider what was and what ought to be the judgment of the Apoſtles concerning Hereſy: for although there are more kinds of vices, than there are of virtues; yet the number of them is to be taken by accounting the tranſgreſſions of their virtues, and by the limits of faith; we may alſo reckon the analogy and proportions of Hereſy, that as we have ſeen who was called faithful by the apoſtolical men, we may alſo perceive who were liſted by them in the catalogue of hereticks, that we in our judgments may proceed accordingly.

II. And firſt the word Hereſy is uſed in ſcripture indifferently, in a good ſenſe for a ſect or diviſion of opinion, and men following it, or ſometimes in a bad ſenſe, for a falſe opinion ſignally condemned; but theſe kind of people were then called Anti-chriſts and falſe prophets more frequently than hereticks, and then there were many of them in the world. But it is obſerveable that no hereſies are noted *ſignanter* in ſcripture,

but ſuch as are great errors practical *in materia pietatis*, ſuch whoſe doctrines taught impiety, or ſuch who denied the coming of Chriſt directly or by conſequence, not remote or wiredrawn, but prime and immediate; and therefore in the Code *de S. Trinitate & fide catholica*, Hereſy is called ἀσεβὴς δόξα, καὶ ἀσεβὴς καὶ θεομάχος διδασκαλία, a wicked opinion and an ungodly doctrine.

III. The firſt falſe doctrine we find condemned by the Apoſtles was the opinion of *Simon Magus*, who thought the Holy Ghoſt was to be bought with money; he thought very diſhonourably to the bleſſed ſpirit; but yet his followers are rather noted of a vice, neither reſting in the underſtanding, nor derived from it, but wholly practical; 'tis ſimony, not hereſy, though in *Simon* it was a falſe opinion proceeding from a low account of God, and promoted by his own ends of pride and covetouſneſs: The great Hereſy that troubled them was the doctrine of the neceſſity of keeping the law of *Moſes*, the neceſſity of circumciſion; againſt which doctrine they were therefore zealous, becauſe it was a direct overthrow to the very end and excellency of Chriſt's coming. And this was an opinion moſt pertinaciouſly and obſtinately maintained by the Jews, and had made a ſect among the *Galatians*, and was indeed wholly in opinion; and againſt it the apoſtles oppoſed two articles of the creed, which ſerved at ſeveral times according as the Jews changed their opinion, and left ſome degrees of their error, *I believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and I believe the holy catholick church*; for they therefore preſſed the neceſſity of *Moſes*'s law, becauſe they were unwilling to forego the glorious appellative of being God's own peculiar people; and that ſalvation was of the Jews, and that the reſt of the world were capable of that grace, no otherwiſe but by adoption into their religion

religion, and becoming proſelytes: But this was ſo ill a doctrine, as that it overthrew the great benefits of Chriſt's coming, for *if they were circumciſed, Chriſt profited them nothing*, meaning this, that Chriſt will not be a ſaviour to them who do not acknowledge him for their law-giver; and they neither confeſs him their law-giver nor their ſaviour, that look to be juſtified by the law of *Moſes*, and obſervation of legal rights; ſo that this doctrine was a direct enemy to the foundation, and therefore the Apoſtles were ſo zealous againſt it. Now then that other opinion, which the Apoſtles met at *Jeruſalem* to reſolve, was but a piece of that opinion; for the Jews and proſelytes were drawn off from their lees and ſediment by degrees, ſtep by ſtep. At firſt, they would not endure any ſhould be ſaved but themſelves, and their proſelytes. Being wrought off from this height by miracles, and preaching of the Apoſtles, they admitted the Gentiles to a poſſibility of ſalvation, but yet ſo as to hope for it by *Moſes*'s law. From which foolery, when they were with much ado diſſuaded, and told that ſalvation was by faith in Chriſt, not by works of the law, yet they reſolved to plow with an ox and an aſs ſtill, and join *Moſes* with Chriſt; not as ſhadow and ſubſtance, but in an equal confederation; Chriſt ſhould ſave the Gentiles if he was helped by *Moſes*; but alone Chriſtianity could not do it. Againſt this the Apoſtles aſſembled at *Jeruſalem*, and made a deciſion of the queſtion, tying ſome of the Gentiles (ſuch only who were blended by the Jews *in communi patria*) to obſervation of ſuch rites which the Jews had derived by tradition from *Noah*, intending by this to ſatisfy the Jews as far as might be, with a reaſonable compliance and condeſcenſion; the other Gentiles who were unmixt, in the mean while,

remaining

remaining free, as appears in the liberty *St. Paul* gave the Church of *Corinth* of eating idol ſacrifices (expreſsly againſt the decree of *Jeruſalem*) ſo it were without ſcandal. And yet for all this care and curious diſcretion, a little of the leaven ſtill remained: All this they thought did ſo concern the Gentiles, that it was totally impertinent to the Jews; ſtill they had a diſtinction to ſatisfy the letter of the Apoſtles decree, and yet to perſiſt in their old opinion; and this ſo continued that fifteen chriſtian biſhops in ſucceſſion were circumciſed, even until the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, under *Adrian*, as *Euſebius* reports. *

IV. Firſt, by the way let me obſerve, that never any matter of queſtion in the chriſtian church was determined with greater ſolemnity, or more full authority of the church than this queſtion concerning circumciſion: No leſs than the whole college of the Apoſtles, and elders at *Jeruſalem*, and that with a decree of the higheſt ſanction, *Viſum eſt ſpiritui ſancto & nobis*. Secondly, either the caſe of the Hebrews in particular was omitted, and no determination concerning them, whether it were neceſſary or lawful for them to be circumciſed, or elſe it was involved in the decree, and intended to oblige the Jews. If it was omitted, ſince the queſtion was *de re neceſſaria* (for *dico vobis*, I *Paul* ſay unto you, *if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing*) it is very remarkable how the Apoſtles to gain the Jews, and to comply with their violent prejudice in behalf of *Moſes*'s law, did for a time tolerate their diſſent *etiam in re alioquin neceſſaria*, which I doubt not but was intended as a precedent for the church to imitate for ever after: But if it was not omitted, either all the multitude of the Jews

* Euſeb. l. 4. Eccleſ. Hiſt. c. 5.

which

(which St. *James* ‡ then their biſhop expreſſed by ὁσαι μυριάδες; *Thou ſeeſt how many myriads of Jews that believe, and yet are zealots for the law*; and *Euſebius* ſpeaking of *Juſtus* ſays, † he was one *ex infinita multitudine eorum qui ex circumciſione in Jeſum credebant*,) I ſay all theſe did periſh, and their believing in Chriſt ſerved them to no other ends, but in the infinity of their torments to upbraid them with hypocriſy and hereſy; or if they were ſaved, it is apparent how merciful God was and pitiful to human infirmities, that in a point of ſo great concernment did pity their weakneſs, and pardon their errors, and love their good mind, ſince their prejudice was little leſs than inſuperable, and had fair probabilities, at leaſt, it was ſuch as might abuſe a wiſe and good man (and ſo it did many) they did *bono animo errare*. And if I miſtake not, this conſideration * St. *Paul* urged as a reaſon why God forgave him who was a perſecutor of the ſaints, becauſe he did it ignorantly in unbelief, that is, he was not convinced in his underſtanding, of the truth of the way which he perſecuted, he in the mean while remaining in that incredulity not out of malice or ill ends, but the miſtakes of humanity and a pious zeal, therefore *God had mercy on him*: And ſo it was in this great queſtion of circumciſion, here only was the difference, the invincibility of St. *Paul*'s error, and the honeſty of his heart cauſed God ſo to pardon him as to bring him to the knowledge of Chriſt, which God therefore did becauſe it was neceſſary, *neceſſitate medii*; no ſalvation was conſiſtent with the actual remanency of that error; but in the queſtion of circumciſion, although they by conſequence did overthrow the end of Chriſt's coming: yet becauſe it was ſuch a conſequence, which they

‡ Acts 21. 10. † L. 3. 32. Eccleſ. Hiſt. * 1 Tim. 1.

being

being hindered by a prejudice not impious did not perceive, God tolerated them in their error till time and a continual dropping of the leſſons and dictates apoſtolical did wear it out, and then the doctrine put on its apparel, and became clothed with neceſſity; they in the mean time ſo kept to the foundation, that is Jeſus Chriſt crucified and riſen again, that although this did make a violent concuſſion of it, yet they held faſt with their heart, what they ignorantly deſtroyed with their tongue, (which *Saul* before his converſion did not) that God upon other titles, than an actual dereliction of their error, did bring them to ſalvation.

V. And in the deſcent of ſo many years, I find not any one anathema paſt by the apoſtles or their ſucceſſors upon any of the biſhops of *Jeruſalem*, or the believers of the circumciſion, and yet it was a point as clearly determined, and of as great neceſſity as any of thoſe queſtions that at this day vex and crucify Chriſtendom.

VI. Beſides this queſtion, and that of the reſurrection, commenced in the church of *Corinth*, and promoted with ſome variety of ſenſe by *Hymenæus* and *Philetus* in *Aſia*, who ſaid that the reſurrection was paſt already, I do not remember any other Hereſy named in ſcripture, but ſuch as were errors of impiety, *ſeductiones in materia practica*, ſuch as was particularly, forbidding to marry, and the Hereſy of the *Nicolaitans*, a doctrine that taught the neceſſity of luſt and frequent fornication.

VII. But in all the animadverſions againſt errors made by the Apoſtles in the New Teſtament, no pious perſon was condemned, no man that did invincibly err, or *bonâ mente*; but ſomething that was amiſs *in genere morum*, was that which the Apoſtles did redargue. And it is very conſide-

derable

rable, that even they of the circumciſion, who in ſo great numbers did heartily believe in Chriſt, and yet moſt violently retain circumciſion, and without queſtion went to heaven in great numbers; yet of the number of theſe very men, they came deeply under cenſure, when to their error they added impiety: ſo long as it ſtood with charity and without human ends and ſecular intereſts, ſo long it was either innocent or connived at; but when they grew covetous, and for filthy lucre's ſake taught the ſame doctrine which others did in the ſimplicity of their hearts, then they turned Hereticks, then they were termed ſeducers; and *Titus* was commanded to look to them, and to ſilence them; *for there are many that are intractable and vain babblers, ſeducers of minds, eſpecially they of the circumciſion, who ſeduce whole houſes, teaching things that they ought not, for filthy lucre's ſake.* Theſe indeed were not to be endured, but to be ſilenced, by the conviction of ſound doctrine, and to be rebuked ſharply, and avoided.

For Hereſy is not an error of the underſtanding, but an error of the will. And this is clearly inſinuated in ſcripture in the ſtile whereof faith and a good life are made one duty, and vice is called oppoſite to faith, and Hereſy oppoſed to holineſs and ſanctity. So in * St. *Paul*, *for* (ſaith he) *the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conſcience, and faith unfeigned; a quibus quod aberrarunt quidam*, from which charity, and purity, and goodneſs, and ſincerity, becauſe ſome have wandered, *deflexerunt ad vaniloquium.* And immediately after he reckons the oppoſition to faith and ſound doctrine, and inſtances only in vices that ſtain the lives of chriſtians, *the unjuſt, the unclean, the uncharitable, the lyar, the perjured perſon, & ſi quis alius qui ſanæ doctrinæ*

* 1 Tim. 1.

doctrinæ adverſatur; theſe are the enemies of the true doctrine. And therefore St. *Peter* having given in charge, to add to our virtue, patience, temperance, charity, and the like; gives this for a reaſon, for if theſe things be in you and abound, ye ſhall be fruitful in the *knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. So that knowledge and faith is *inter præcepta morum*, is part of a good life.* : And St. *Paul* calls Faith or the form of ſound words, κατ' ευσεβειαν διδασκαλιαν, the doctrine that is according to godlineſs, 1 *Tim.* 6. 3. † And *veritati credere*, and *in injuſtitia ſibi complacere*, are by the ſame Apoſtle oppoſed, and intimate, that piety and faith is all one thing; faith muſt be ὑγιης και ἀμωμος, entire and holy too, or it is not right. It was the Hereſy of the *Gnoſticks*, that it was no matter how men lived, ſo they did but believe aright: which wicked doctrine *Tatianus* a learned chriſtian did ſo deteſt, that he fell into a quite contrary, *non eſt curandum quid quiſque credat, id tantum curandum eſt quod quiſque faciat*; and thence came the ſect *Encratites*: Both theſe hereſies ſprang from the too nice diſtinguiſhing the faith from the piety and good life of a chriſtian: they are both but one duty. However, they may be diſtinguiſhed, if we ſpeak like philoſophers; they cannot be diſtinguiſhed, when we ſpeak like chriſtians. For to believe what God hath commanded, is in order to a good life; and to live well is the product of that believing, and as proper emanation from it, as from its proper principle, and as heat is from the fire. And therefore,

* Quid igitur credulitas vel fides? opinor fideliter hominem Chriſto credere, id eſt, fidelem Deo eſſe, hoc eſt, fideliter Dei mandata ſervare. *So Salvian.*

† Ἐυσεβης των χριστιανων θρησκεια; That's our religion or faith, the whole manner of ſerving God. *C. de ſumma Trinit. & fide Cathol.*

in

in ſcripture they are uſed promiſcuouſly in ſenſe, and in expreſſion, as not only being ſubjected in the ſame perſon, but alſo in the ſame faculty; faith is as truly ſeated in the will as in the underſtanding, and a good life as merely derives from the underſtanding as the will. Both of them are matters of choice and of election, neither of them an effect natural and invincible or neceſſary antecedently (*neceſſaria ut fiant, non neceſſario facta.*) And indeed if we remember that St. *Paul* reckons hereſy among the works of the fleſh, and ranks it with all manner of practical impieties, we ſhall eaſily perceive that if a man mingled not a vice with his opinion, if he be innocent in his life, though deceived in his doctrine, his error is his miſery, not his crime; it makes him an argument of weakneſs and an object of pity, but not a perſon ſealed up to ruin and reprobation.

IX. For as the nature of Faith is, ſo is the nature of Hereſy, contraries having the ſame proportion and commenſuration. Now faith, if it be taken for an act of the underſtanding merely, is ſo far from being that excellent grace that juſtifies us, that it is not good at all, in any kind but *in genere naturæ*, and makes the underſtanding better in itſelf, or pleaſing to God, juſt as ſtrength doth the arm, or beauty the face, or health the body; theſe are natural perfections indeed, and ſo knowledge and a true belief is to the underſtanding. But this makes us not at all more acceptable to God; for then the unlearned were certainly in a damnable condition, and all good Scholars ſhould be ſaved (whereas I am afraid too much of the contrary is true.) But unleſs faith be made moral by the mixtures of choice, and charity, it is nothing but a natural perfection, not a grace or a virtue; and this is demonſtrably prov'd in this, that by the confeſſion of all men of all intereſts and

and perſuaſions, in matters of mere belief, invincible ignorance is our excuſe if we be deceived, which could not be, but that neither to believe aright is commendable, nor to believe amiſs is reproveable; but where both one and the other is voluntary and choſen antecedently or conſequently, by prime election or *ex poſt facto*, and ſo comes to be conſidered in morality, and is part of a good life or a bad life reſpectively. Juſt ſo it is in Hereſy, if it be a deſign of ambition, and making of a ſect (ſo *Eraſmus* expounds St. *Paul* αἱρετικον ανθρωπον, *ſectarum* * *authorem*) if it be for filthy lucre's ſake as it was in ſome, that were of the circumciſion, if it be of pride and love of pre-eminence, as it was in *Diotrephes* ὁ φιλοπρωτευων, or out of peviſhneſs and indocility of diſpoſitions, or of a contentious ſpirit, that is, that their feet are not ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace; in all theſe caſes the error is juſt ſo damnable, as is its principle, but therefore damnable not of itſelf, but by reaſon of its adherency. And if any ſhall ſay any otherwiſe, it is to ſay that ſome men ſhall be damned when they cannot help it, periſh without their own fault, and be miſerable for ever, becauſe of their unhappineſs to be deceived through their own ſimplicity and natural or accidental, but inculpable infirmity.

X. For it cannot ſtand with the goodneſs of God, who does ſo know our infirmities, that he pardons many things in which our wills indeed have the leaſt ſhare (but ſome they have) but are overborn with the violence of an impetuous temptation; I ſay, it is inconſiſtent with his goodneſs to condemn thoſe who err where the error hath nothing of the will in it, who therefore

* Alieni ſunt a veritate qui ſe obarmant multitudine. *Chryſt.*

cannot

cannot repent of their error, becauſe they believe it true, who therefore cannot make compenſation becauſe they know not that they are tied to dereliction of it. And although all hereticks are in this condition, that is, they believe their errors to be true; yet there is a vaſt difference between them who believe ſo out of ſimplicity, and them who are given over to believe a lie, as a puniſhment or an effect of ſome other wickedneſs or impiety. For all have a concomitant aſſent to the truth of what they believe; and no man can at the ſame time believe what he does not believe, but this aſſent of the underſtanding in hereticks is cauſed not by force of argument, but the argument is made forcible by ſomething that is amiſs in his will; and although a heretick may peradventure have a ſtronger argument for his error than ſome true believer for his right perſuaſion; yet it is not conſiderable how ſtrong his argument is (becauſe in a weak underſtanding, a ſmall motive will produce a great perſuaſion, like gentle phyſick in a weak body) but that which here is conſiderable, is, what it is that made his argument forcible. If his invincible and harmleſs prejudice, if his weakneſs, if his education, if his miſtaken piety, if any thing that hath no venom, nor a ſting in it, there the heartineſs of his perſuaſion is no ſin, but his miſery and his excuſe: but if any thing that is evil *in genere morum* did incline his underſtanding, if his opinion did commence upon pride, or is nouriſhed by covetouſneſs, or continues through ſtupid careleſneſs, or increaſes by pertinacy, or is confirmed by obſtinacy, then the innocency of the error is diſbanded, his miſery is changed into a crime, and begins its own puniſhment. But by the way I muſt obſerve, that when I reckoned *obſtinacy* amongſt thoſe things which make a falſe opinion

it is to be underſtood with ſome diſcretion and diſtinction. For there is an obſtinacy of will which is indeed highly guilty of miſdemeanor, and when the ſchool makes pertinacy or obſtinacy to be the formality of hereſy, they ſay not true at all, unleſs it be meant the obſtinacy of the will and choice; and if they do, they ſpeak imperfectly and inartificially, this being but one of the cauſes that makes error become hereſy; the adequate and perfect formality of hereſy is whatſoever makes the error voluntary and vicious, as is clear in ſcripture, reckoning covetouſneſs, and pride, and luſt, and whatſoever is vicious to be its cauſes; (and in habits, or moral changes and productions, whatever alters the eſſence of a habit, or gives it a new formality, is not to be reckoned the efficient but the form) but there is alſo an obſtinacy (you may call it) but indeed, is nothing but a reſolution and confirmation of underſtanding which is not in a man's power honeſtly to alter, and it is not all the commands of humanity, that can be argument ſufficient to make a man leave believing that for which he thinks he hath reaſon, and for which he hath ſuch arguments as heartily convince him. Now the perſiſting in an opinion finally, and againſt all the confidence and imperiouſneſs of human commands, that makes not this criminal obſtinacy, if the erring perſon have ſo much humility of will as to ſubmit to whatever God ſays, and that no vice in his will hinders him from believing it. So that we muſt carefully diſtinguiſh continuance in opinion from obſtinacy, confidence of underſtanding from peviſhneſs of affection, a not being convinced from a reſolution never to be convinced, upon human ends and vicious principles: * *Scimus quoſdam quod ſemel imbiberint nolle deponere, nec pro-*

* Lib. 2. Epiſt. 1.

poſitum

poſitum ſuum facile mutare, ſed ſalvo inter collegas pacis et concordiæ vinculo quædam propria quæ apud ſe ſemel ſint uſurpata retinere; qua in re nec nos vim cuiquam facimus, aut legem damus, ſaith St. *Cyprian*. And he himſelf was ſuch a one; for he perſiſted in his opinion of rebaptization until death, and yet his obſtinacy was not called criminal, or his error turned to hereſy. But to return.

XI. In this ſenſe it is, that a heretick is αὐτοκατακρίτος, ſelf condemned, not by an immediate expreſs ſentence of underſtanding, but by his own act or fault brought into condemnation. As it is in the canon law, *Notorius percuſſor clerici* is *ipſo jure* excommunicate, not *per ſententiam latam ab homine*, but *a jure*. No man hath paſſed ſentence *pro tribunali*, but law hath decreed it *pro edicto*: So it is in the caſe of a heretick. The underſtanding which is judge, condemns him not by an expreſs ſentence; for he errs with as much ſimplicity in the reſult, as he had malice in the principle: But there is *ſintentia lata a jure*, his will which is his law, that hath condemned him. And this is gathered from that ſaying of St. *Paul*, * *But evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived*: Firſt, they are evil men; malice and peeviſhneſs is in their wills; then they turn hereticks and ſeduce others, and while they grow worſe and worſe, the error is maſter of their underſtanding, they are deceived themſelves, *given over to believe a lie*, ſaith the apoſtle: They firſt play the knave, and then play the fool; they firſt ſell themſelves to the purchaſe of vain glory or ill ends, and then they become poſſeſſed with a lying ſpirit, and believe thoſe things heartily, which if they were honeſt, they ſhould with God's grace diſcover and diſclaim.

* 2 Tim. 3, 13.

So that now we ſee that *bona fides in falſo articulo*, a hearty perſuaſion in a falſe article does not always make the error to be eſteemed involuntary; but then only when it is as innocent in the principle as it is confident in the preſent perſuaſion. And ſuch perſons who by their ill lives and vicious actions, or manifeſt deſigns (*for by their fruits ye ſhall know them*) give teſtimony of ſuch criminal indiſpoſitions, ſo as competent judges by human and prudent eſtimate may ſo judge them, then they are to be declared hereticks, and avoided. And if this were not true, it were vain that the Apoſtle commands us to avoid an heretick: for no external act can paſs upon a man for a crime that is not cognoſcible.

XII. Now every man that errs, though in a matter of conſequence, ſo long as the foundation is intire, cannot be ſuſpected juſtly guilty of a crime to give his error a formality of hereſy: for we ſee many a good man miſerably deceived (as we ſhall make it appear afterwards) and he that is the beſt amongſt men, certainly hath ſo much humility to think he may be eaſily deceived, and twenty to one but he is in ſome thing or other; yet if his error be not voluntary, and part of an ill life, then becauſe he lives a good life, he is a good man, and therefore no heretick: no man is a heretick againſt his will. And if it be pretended that every man that is deceived, is therefore proud, becauſe he does not ſubmit his underſtanding to the authority of God or Man reſpectively, and ſo his error becomes a hereſy: to this I anſwer, that there is no chriſtian man but will ſubmit his underſtanding to God, and believes whatſoever he hath ſaid; but always provided, he knows that God hath ſaid ſo, elſe he muſt do his duty by a readineſs to obey when he ſhall know it. But for obedience or humility of the underſtanding

ſtanding towards men, that is a thing of another conſideration, and it muſt firſt be made evident that his underſtanding muſt be ſubmitted to men; and who thoſe men are, muſt alſo be certain, before it will be adjudged a ſin not to ſubmit. But if I miſtake not, Chriſt's ſaying [*call no man maſter upon earth*] is ſo great a prejudice againſt this pretence, as I doubt it will go near wholly to make it invalid. So that as the worſhipping of angels is a humility indeed, but it is voluntary and a will-worſhip to an ill ſenſe, not to be excuſed by the excellency of humility, nor the virtue of religion: ſo is the relying upon the judgment of man, an humility too, but ſuch as comes not under that ὑπακοὴν πίστεως, that obedience of faith which is the duty of every chriſtian; but intrenches upon that duty which we owe to Chriſt, as an acknowledgment that he is our great maſter, and the prince of the catholick church. But whether it be or be not, if that be the queſtion whether the diſagreeing perſon be to be determined by the dictates of men, I am ſure the dictates of men muſt not determine him in that queſtion, but it muſt be ſettled by ſome higher principle: So that if of that queſtion the diſagreeing perſon does opine, or believe, or err *bona fide*, he is not therefore to be judged a heretick, becauſe he ſubmits not his underſtanding, becauſe till it be ſufficiently made certain to him that he be bound to ſubmit, he may innocently and piouſly diſagree, and this not ſubmitting is therefore not a crime, (and ſo cannot make a hereſy) becauſe without a crime he my laawfully doubt whether he is bound to ſubmit or no, for that's the queſtion. And if in ſuch queſtions which have influence upon a whole ſyſtem of theology, a man may doubt lawfully if he doubts heartily, becauſe the authority of men being the thing in queſtion, cannot

be the judge of this queſtion, and therefore being rejected, or (which is all one) being queſtioned, that is, not believed, cannot render the doubting perſon guilty of pride, and by conſequence not of Hereſy, much more may particular queſtions be doubted of, and the authority of men examined, and yet the doubting perſon be humble enough, and therefore no heretick for all this pretence. And it ſhould be conſidered that humility is a duty in great ones as well as in ideots. And as inferiors muſt not diſagree without reaſon, ſo neither muſt ſuperiors preſcribe to others without ſufficient authority, evidence, and neceſſity too: And if rebellion be pride, ſo is tyranny; and it being *in materiâ intellectuali*, both may be guilty of pride of underſtanding, ſometimes the one in impoſing, ſometimes the other in a cauſeleſs diſagreeing; but in the inferiors it is then only the want of humility, when the guides impoſe or preſcribe what God hath alſo taught, and then it is the diſobeying God's dictates, not man's that makes the ſin. But then this conſideration will alſo intervene, that as no dictate of God obliges me to believe it, unleſs I know it to be ſuch: So neither will any of the dictates of my ſuperiors, engage my faith, unleſs I alſo know, or have no reaſon to diſbelieve, but that they are warranted to teach them to me, therefore, becauſe God hath taught the ſame to them, which if I once know, or have no reaſon to think the contrary, if I diſagree, my ſin is not in reſiſting human authority, but divine. And therefore the whole buſineſs of ſubmitting our underſtanding to human authority, comes to nothing; for either it reſolves into the direct duty of ſubmitting to God, or if it be ſpoken of abſtractedly, it is no duty at all.

XIII.

XIII. But this pretence of a neceſſity of humbling the underſtanding, is none of the meaneſt arts whereby ſome perſons have invaded, and uſurped a power over men's faith and conſciences, and therefore we ſhall examine the pretence afterwards, and try if God hath inveſted any man or company of men with ſuch a power. In the mean time, he that ſubmits his underſtanding to all that he knows God hath ſaid, and is ready to ſubmit to all that he hath ſaid if he but know it, denying his own affections and ends, and intereſts and human perſuaſions, laying them all down at the foot of his great maſter Jeſus Chriſt, that man hath brought his underſtanding into ſubjection, and every proud thought unto obedience of Chriſt, and this is υπακοη πιστεως, the obedience of Faith, which is the duty of a chriſtian.

XIV. But to proceed: Beſides theſe hereſies noted in ſcripture, the age of the apoſtles, and that which followed, was infeſted with other hereſies; but ſuch as had the ſame formality and malignity with the precedent, all of them either ſuch as taught practical impieties, or denied an article of the creed. *Egeſippus* in *Euſebius* reckons ſeven only prime hereſies that ſought to deflower the purity of the church: That of *Simon*, that of *Thebutes*, of *Cleobius*, of *Doſitheus*, of *Gortheus*, of *Maſbotheus*; I ſuppoſe *Cerinthus* to have been the ſeventh man, though he expreſs him not: but of theſe, except the laſt, we know no particulars; but that *Egeſippus* ſays, they were falſe Chriſts, and that their doctrine was directly againſt God and his bleſſed Son. *Menander* alſo was the firſt of a ſect, but he bewitched the people with his ſorceries. *Cerinthus* his doctrine pretended enthuſiaſm or a new revelation, and ended in luſt and impious theorems in matter of uncleanneſs.

The * *Ebionites* denied Chriſt to be the ſon of God, and affirmed him, ψιλον ανθρωπον, begot by natural generation, (by occaſion of which and the importunity of the *Aſian* biſhops, St. *John* writ his goſpel) and taught the obſervation of *Moſes*'s law. *Baſilides* taught it lawful to renounce the faith, and take falſe oaths in time of perſecution. *Carpocrates* was a very bedlam, half-witch, and quite mad-man, and practiſed luſt, which he called the ſecret operations to overcome the potentates of the world. Some more there were, but of the ſame nature and peſt, not of a nicety in diſpute, not a queſtion of ſecret philoſophy, not of atoms, and undiſcernable propoſitions, but open defiances of all faith, of all ſobriety, and of all ſanctity, excepting only the doctrine of the Millenaries, which in the beſt ages was eſteemed no Hereſy, but true catholick doctrine, though ſince it hath juſtice done to it, and hath ſuffered a juſt condemnation.

XV. Hitherto, and in theſe inſtances, the church did eſteem and judge of Hereſies, in proportion to the rules and characters of faith. For faith being a doctrine of piety as well as truth, that which was either deſtructive of fundamental verity, or of chriſtian ſanctity was againſt faith, and if it made a ſect, was hereſy: if not, it ended in perſonal impiety and went no farther. But thoſe, who as St. *Paul* ſays, not only did ſuch things, but had pleaſure in them that do them, and therefore taught others to do what they impiouſly did dogmatize, they were hereticks both in matter and form, in doctrine and deportment, towards God, and towards man, and judicable in both tribunals.

XVI. But the Scripture and Apoſtolical ſermons, having expreſſed moſt high indignation againſt

* Vid. Hilar. lib. 1. de Trin.

theſe

theſe maſters of impious ſects, leaving them under prodigious characters, and horrid repreſentments, as calling them *men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith, given over to ſtrong deluſions to the belief of a lye, falſe Apoſtles, falſe Prophets, men already condemned, and that by themſelves, Anti-chriſts, enemies of God*; and Hereſy itſelf, *a work of the fleſh, excluding from the kingdom of heaven*; left ſuch impreſſions in the minds of all their ſucceſſors, and ſo much zeal againſt ſuch ſects, that if any opinion commenced in the church, not heard of before; it oftentimes had this ill luck to run the ſame fortune with an old Hereſy. For becauſe the Hereticks did bring in new opinions in matters of great concernment, every opinion *de novo* brought in was liable to the ſame exception; and becauſe the degree of malignity in every error was oftentimes undiſcernable, and moſt commonly indemonſtrable, their zeal was alike againſt all; and thoſe ages being full of piety, were fitted to be abuſed with an overactive zeal, as wiſe perſons and learned are with a too much indifferency.

XVII. But it came to paſs, that the further the ſucceſſion went from the Apoſtles, the more forward men were in numbering Hereſies, and that upon ſlighter and more uncertain grounds. Some footſteps of this we ſhall find, if we conſider the ſects that are ſaid to have ſprung in the firſt three hundred years, and they were pretty quick in their ſprings and falls; fourſcore and ſeven of them are recokned. They were indeed reckoned afterward, and though when they were alive, they were not condemned with as much forwardneſs, as after they were dead; yet even then, confidence began to mingle with opinions leſs neceſſary, and miſtakes in judgement were oftner and more publick than they ſhould have been. But if

they

they were forward in their cenſures (as ſome times ſome of them were) it is no great wonder they were deceived. For what principle or κριτηριον had they then to judge of Hereſies, or condemn them, beſides the ſingle dictates or decretals of private biſhops? for ſcripture was indifferently pretended by all; and concerning the meaning of it, was the queſtion: now there was no general council all that while, no opportunity for the church to convene; and if we ſearch the communicatory letters of the biſhops and martyrs in thoſe days, we ſhall find but few ſentences decretory concerning any queſtion of faith, or new ſprung opinion. And in thoſe that did, for aught appears, the perſons were miſ-reported, or their opinions miſtaken, or at moſt, the ſentence of condemnation was no more but this; Such a biſhop who hath had the good fortune by poſterity to be reputed a catholick, did condemn ſuch a man or ſuch an opinion, and yet himſelf err'd in as conſiderable matters, but meeting with better neighbours in his life time, and a more charitable poſterity, háth his memory preſerved in honour. It appears plain enough in the caſe of *Nicholas* the deacon of *Antioch*, upon a miſtake of his words whereby he taught παραχρησθαι τη σαρκι to abuſe the fleſh, *viz.* by acts of auſterity and ſelf denial, and mortification; ſome wicked people that were glad to be miſtaken and abuſed into a pleaſing crime, pretended that he taught them to abuſe the fleſh by filthy commixtures and pollutions: this miſtake was tranſmitted to poſterity with a full cry, and acts afterwards found out to juſtify an ill opinion of him. For by St. *Hierome's* time it grew out of queſtion, but that he was the vileſt of men, and the worſt of hereticks; * *Nicolaus Antiochenus, omnium immunditi-*

* Ad Creſiph.

arum

arum conditor choros duxit fæmineos. And again, † *Iſte Nicolaus Diaconus ita immundus extitit ut etiam in præſepi Domini nefas perpetrarit:* Accuſations that while the good man lived were never thought of; for his daughters were virgins, and his ſons lived in holy cœlibate all their lives, and himſelf lived in chaſte wedlock; and yet his memory had rotted in perpetual infamy, had not God (in whoſe ſight, the memory of the ſaints is precious) preſerved it by the teſtimony of * *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and from him of § *Euſebius* and *Nicephorus*. But in the catalogue of hereticks made by *Philaſtrius* he ſtands marked with a black character as guilty of many Hereſies: By which one teſtimony we may gueſs what truſt is to be given to thoſe catalogues: well, this good man had ill luck to fall into unſkilful hands at firſt; but *Irenæus*, *Juſtin Martyr*, *Lactantius*, (to name no more) had better fortune; for it being ſtill extant in their writings that they were of the Millenary opinion, *Papias* before, and *Nepos* after were cenſured hardly, and the opinion put into the catalogue of Hereſies, and yet theſe men never ſuſpected as guilty, but like the children of captivity walked in the midſt of the flame, and not ſo much as the ſmell of fire paſſed on them. But the uncertainty of theſe things is very memorable, in the Story of *Euſtathius* biſhop of *Antioch* conteſting with *Euſebius Pamphilus*: *Euſtathius* accuſed *Euſebius* for going about to corrupt the *Nicene* creed, of which ſlander he then acquitted himſelf (ſaith *Socrates* ‡) and yet he is not cleared by poſterity, for ſtill he is ſuſpected, and his fame not clear: However *Euſebius* then ſcap'd well, but to be quit with his adverſary, he recriminates and accuſes him to be a favourer of *Sabellius*, *rather than of the*

† Epiſt. de Fabiano lapſo. * L. 3. Stromat. § L. 3. c. 26. Hiſt. ‡ L. 1. c. 23.

Nicene

Nicene Canons; an imperfect accuſation, God knows, when the crime was a ſuſpicion, proveable only by actions capable of divers conſtructions, and at the moſt, made but ſome degrees of probability. and the fact it ſelf did not conſiſt *in indiviſibility*, and therefore was to ſtand or fall, to be improved or leſſened according to the will of the judges, whom in this cauſe *Euſtathius* by his ill fortune and potent adverſary found harſh towards him, in ſo much that he was for Hereſy depoſed in the ſynod of *Antioch*; and though this was laid open in the eye of the world as being moſt ready at hand, with the greateſt eaſe chargd upon every man, and with greateſt difficulty acquitted by any man; yet there were other ſuſpicions raiſed upon him privately, or at leaſt talked of *ex poſt facto*, and pretended as cauſes of his deprivation, leaſt the ſentence ſhould ſeem too hard for the firſt offence. And yet what they were no man could tell, ſaith the ſtory. But it is obſervable what *Socrates* ſaith, as in excuſe of ſuch proceedings, Τϐτο δε ἐπι ϖαντων ειωϑασι των καταιρϑμενων ϖοιειν οι ἐπισκοποι, καληγορϑντες μεν και ασεϐη λεγοντες, τας δε αιτιας της ασεϐειας ϑ λεγϐσι. "It is the manner among the biſhops, when "they accuſe them that are depoſed, they call "them wicked, but they publiſh not the actions "of their impiety." It might poſſibly be that the biſhops did it in tenderneſs of their reputation, but yet hardly; for to puniſh a perſon publickly and highly, is a certain declaring the perſon puniſhed guilty of a high crime; and then to conceal the fault upon pretence to preſerve his reputation, leaves every man at liberty to conjecture what he pleaſeth, who poſſibly will believe it worſe than it is, in as much as they think

* L. 1. c. 24.

his

his judges ſo charitable as therefore to conceal the fault, leaſt the publiſhing of it ſhould be his greateſt puniſhment, and the ſcandal greater than his deprivation. * However this courſe, if it were juſt in any, was unſafe in all; for it might undo more than it could preſerve, and therefore is of more danger, than it can be of charity. It is therefore too probable that the matter was not very fair; for in publick ſentence the acts ought to be publick; but that they rather pretend Hereſy to bring their ends about, ſhews how eaſy it is to impute that crime, and how forward they were to do it. And that they might and did then as eaſily call Heretick as afterward, when *Vigilius* was condemned of Hereſy for ſaying there were *Antipodes*; or as the friars of late did, who ſuſpected Greek and Hebrew of Hereſy, and called their profeſſors Hereticks, and had like to have put *Terence* and *Demoſthenes* into the *Index Expurgatorius*; ſure enough they railed at them *pro concione*, therefore becauſe they underſtood them not, and had reaſon to believe they would accidentally be enemies to their reputation among the people.

XVIII. By this inſtance which was a while after the *Nicene* council, where the acts of the church were regular, judicial and orderly, we may gueſs at the ſentences paſſed upon hereſy, at ſuch times and in ſuch caſes, when their proceſs was more private, and their acts more tumultuary, their information leſs certain, and therefore their miſtakes more eaſy and frequent. And it is remarkable in the caſe of the Hereſy of *Montanus*, the ſcene of whoſe Hereſy lay within the firſt three hundred years, though it was repreſented in the catalogues

* Simpliciter pateat vitium fortaſſe puſillum, Quod tegitur majus creditur eſſe malum. *Martial.*

afterwards,

afterwards, and poſſibly the miſtake concerning it, is to be put upon the ſcore of *Epiphanius*, by whom *Montanus* and his followers were put into the catalogue of Hereticks for commanding abſtinence from meats, as if they were unclean, and of themſelves unlawful. Now the truth was, *Montanus* ſaid no ſuch thing, but commanded frequent abſtinence, enjoined dry diet, and an aſcetick table, not for conſcience ſake, but for diſcipline; and yet becauſe he did this with too much rigour and ſtrictneſs of mandate, the primitive church miſliked it in him, as being too near their error, who by a judicial ſuperſtition abſtained from meats as from uncleanneſs. This by the way will much concern them who place too much ſanctity in ſuch rites and acts of diſcipline; for it is an eternal rule and of never failing truth, that ſuch abſtinences if they be obtruded as acts of original immediate duty and ſanctity, are unlawful and ſuperſtitious; if they be for diſcipline they may be good, but of no very great profit; it is that ὠφελία τῆ σωμαλ☉ which St. *Paul* ſays profiteth but little; and juſt in the ſame degree the primitive church eſteemed them; for they therefore reprehended *Montanus*, for urging ſuch abſtinences with too much earneſtneſs, though but in the way of diſcipline, for that it was no more, *Tertullian*, who was himſelf a *Montaniſt*, and knew beſt the opinions of his own ſect, teſtifies; and yet *Epiphanius* reporting the errors of *Montanus*, commends that which *Montanus* truly and really taught, and which the primitive church condemned in him, and therefore repreſents that Hereſy to another ſenſe, and affixes that to *Montanus*, which *Epiphanius* believed a Hereſy, and yet which *Montanus* did not teach. And this alſo among many other thi gs leſſens my opinion very much of the integrity or diſcretion

diſcretion of the old catalogues of Hereticks, and much abates my confidence towards them.

XIX. And now that I have mentioned them caſually in paſſing by, I ſhall give a ſhort account of them; for men are much miſtaken; ſome in their opinions concerning the truth of them, as believing them to be all true, ſome concerning their purpoſe as thinking them ſufficient not only to condemn all thoſe opinions, there called heretical; but to be a precedent to all ages of the church to be free and forward in calling Heretick. But he that conſiders the catalogues themſelves, as they are collected by *Epiphanius*, *Philaſtrius*, and St. *Auſtin*, will find that many are reckoned Hereticks for opinions in matters diſputable, and undetermined, and of no conſequence; and that in theſe catalogues of Hereticks there are men numbered for Hereticks, who by every ſide reſpectively are acquitted; ſo that there is no company of men in the world that admit theſe catalogues as good records, or ſufficient ſentences of condemnation. For the churches of the reformation, I am certain they acquit *Aërius* for denying prayer for the dead, and the *Euſtathians* for denying invocation of ſaints. And I am partly of opinion that the church of *Rome* is not willing to call the *Collyridians* Hereticks for offering a cake to the virgin *Mary*, unleſs ſhe alſo will run the hazard of the ſame ſentence for offering candles to her: And that they will be glad with St. *Auſtin* (*l.* 6. *de hæreſ. c.* 86.) to excuſe the * *Tertullianiſts* for picturing God in a viſible corporeal repreſentment. And yet theſe ſects are put in the black book by *Epiphanius* and St. *Auſtin*, and *Iſidore* reſpectively. I remember alſo that the *Oſſeni* are called Hereticks, becauſe they refuſed to worſhip toward the eaſt; and yet in that diſſent, I

* D. *Thom.* l. contr. gent. c. 21.

find

find not the malignity of a Hereſy, nor any thing againſt an article of faith or good manners; and it being only in circumſtance, it were hard, if they were otherwiſe pious men and true believers, to ſend them to hell for ſuch a trifle. The *Parermeneutæ* refuſed to follow other mens dictates like ſheep, but would expound ſcripture according to the beſt evidence themſelves could find, and yet were called Hereticks whether they expounded true or no. The * *Pauliciani* for being offended at croſſes, the *Proclians* for ſaying in a regenerate man all his ſins were not quite dead, but only curbed and aſſuaged, were called Hereticks, and ſo condemned; for ought I know for affirming that which all pious men feel in themſelves to be too true. And he that will conſider how numerous the catalogues are, and to what a volume they are come in their laſt collections, to no leſs than five hundred and twenty (for ſo many Hereſies and Hereticks are reckoned by *Prateolus*) may think that if a re-trenchment were juſtly made of truths, and all impertinencies, and all opinions, either ſtill diſputable, or leſs conſiderable, the number would much decreaſe; and therefore that the catalogues are much amiſs, and the name Heretick is made a *terriculamentum* to affright people from their belief, or to diſcountenance the perſons of men, and diſrepute them, that their ſchools may be empty and their diſciples few.

XX. So that I ſhall not need to inſtance how that ſome men were called Hereticks by *Philaſtrius* for rejecting the tranſlation of the Lxx. and following the bible of *Aquila*, wherein the great faults mentioned by *Philaſtrius*, are that he tranſlates Χριςον Θεϐ, not *Chriſtum*, but *unctum Dei*,

* Euthym. part 1. tit. 21. Epiphan. hæreſ. 64.

and

and inſtead of *Emanuel* writes *Deus nobiſcum*. But this moſt concerns them of the primitive church with whom the tranſlation of *Aquila* was in great reputation; *is enim veluti plus a quibuſdam . . . . intellexiſſe laudatur*. It was ſuppoſed he was a greater clerk and underſtood more than ordinary; it may be, ſo he did. But whether yea or no, yet ſince the other tranſlators by the confeſſion of *Philaſtrius*, *quædam prætermiſiſſe neceſſitate urgente cogerentur*, if ſome wiſe men or unwiſe did follow a tranſlator who underſtood the original well, (for ſo *Aquila* had learnt amongſt the jews) it was hard to call men Hereticks for following his tranſlation, eſpecially ſince the other bibles (which were thought to have in them contradictories, and it was confeſſed, had omitted ſome things) were excuſed by neceſſity, and the other neceſſity of following *Aquila*, when they had no better, was not at all conſidered, nor a leſs crime than Hereſy laid upon their ſcore *. Such another was the Hereſy of the *Quartodecimani*; for the *Eaſterlings* were all proclaimed Hereticks for keeping *Eaſter* after the manner of the eaſt; and as *Socrates* and *Nicephorus* report, the biſhop of *Rome* was very forward to excommunicate all the biſhops of the leſſer *Aſia* for obſerving the feaſt according to the tradition of their anceſtors, though they did it modeſtly, quietly, and without faction; and although they pretended, and were as well able, to prove their tradition from St. *John*, of ſo obſerving it, as the weſtern church could prove their tradition derivative from St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*. If ſuch things as theſe make up the catalogues of Hereticks (as we ſee they did) their accounts differ from the precedents they ought to have fol-

* Philaſtr. 99. eos inter hæreticos numerat qui ſpiraculum vitæ in libro Geneſ. interpretantur animam rationalem, & non potius gratiam ſpiritus ſancti.

lowed, that is, the cenſures apoſtolical, and therefore are unſafe precedents for us; and unleſs they took the liberty of uſing the word Hereſy, in a lower ſenſe, than the world now doth, ſince the councils have been forward in pronouncing anathema, and took it only for a diſtinct ſenſe, and a differing perſuaſion in matters of opinion and minute articles, we cannot excuſe the perſons of the men: but if they intended the crime of Hereſy againſt thoſe opinions as they laid them down in their catalogues, that crime (I ſay) which is a work of the fleſh, which excludes from the kingdom of heaven; all that I ſhall ſay againſt them, is, that the cauſeleſs curſe ſhall return empty, and no man is damned the ſooner, becauſe his enemy cries οὐ καλῶραται, and they that were the judges and accuſers, might err as well as the perſons accuſed, and might need as charitable conſtruction of their opinions and practices, as the other. And of this we are ſure they had no warrant from any rule of ſcripture or practice apoſtolical, for driving ſo furiouſly and haſtily in ſuch decretory ſentences. But I am willing rather to believe their ſenſe of the word *Hereſy* was more gentle than with us it is, and for that they might have warrant from ſcripture.

XXI. But by the way, I obſerve that although theſe catalogues are a great inſtance to ſhew that they whoſe age and ſpirits were far diſtant from the apoſtles, had alſo other judgments concerning faith and Hereſy, than the apoſtles had, and the ages apoſtolical; yet theſe catalogues, although they are reports of Hereſies in the ſecond and third ages, are not to be put upon the account of thoſe ages, nor to be reckoned as an inſtance of their judgment, which although it was in ſome degrees more culpable than that of their predeceſſors, yet in reſpect of the following ages it was

innocent

innocent and modeſt. But theſe catalogues I ſpeak of, were ſet down according to the ſenſe of the then preſent ages, in which as they in all probability did differ from the apprehenſions of the former centuries, ſo it is certain, there were differing learnings, other fancies, divers repreſentments and judgments of men depending upon circumſtances which the firſt ages knew, and the following ages did not; and therefore the catalogues were drawn with ſome truth, but leſs certainty, as appears in their differing about the authors of ſome Hereſies; ſeveral opinions imputed to the ſame, and ſome put in the roll of Hereticks by one, which the other left out; which to me is an argument that the Collectors were determined, not by the ſenſe and ſentences of the three firſt ages, but by themſelves, and ſome circumſtances about them, which to reckon for Hereticks, which not. And that they themſelves were the prime judges, or perhaps ſome in their own age together with them; but there was not any ſufficient external judicatory competent to declare Hereſy, that by any publick or ſufficient ſentence or acts of court had furniſhed them with warrant for their catalogues. And therefore they are no argument ſufficient that the firſt ages of the church, which certainly were the beſt, did much recede from that which I ſhewed to be the ſenſe of the ſcripture, and the practice of the apoſtles; they all contented themſelves with the apoſtles creed as the rule of the faith; and therefore were not forward to judge of Hereſy, but by analogy to their rule of faith: And thoſe catalogues made after theſe ages are not ſufficient arguments that they did otherwiſe; but rather of the weakneſs of ſome perſons, or of the ſpirit and genius of the age in which the compilers lived, in which the device of calling all differing opinions by the

name of Hereſies, might grow to be a deſign to ſerve ends, and to promote intereſts, as often as an act of zeal and juſt indignation againſt evil perſons, deſtroyers of the faith, and corrupters of manners.

XXII. For whatever private mens opinions were, yet till the *Nicene* council, the rule of faith was entire in the apoſtles creed, and provided they retained that, eaſily they broke not the unity of faith, however differing opinions might poſſibly commence in ſuch things, in which a liberty were better ſuffered, than prohibited with a breach of charity. And this appears exactly in the queſtion between St. *Cyprian* of *Carthage*, and *Stephen* biſhop of *Rome*, in which one inſtance it is eaſy to ſee what was lawful and ſafe for a wiſe and good man, and yet how others began even then to be abuſed by that temptation, which ſince hath invaded all Chriſtendom. St. *Cyprian* re-baptized Hereticks, and thought he was bound ſo to do; calls a ſynod in *Africk*, as being metropolitan, and confirms his opinion by the conſent of his ſuffragans and brethren, but ſtill with ſo much modeſty, that if any man was of another opinion, he judged him not, but gave him that liberty that he deſired himſelf; *Stephen* biſhop of *Rome* grows angry, excommunicates the biſhops of *Aſia* and *Africa*, that in divers ſynods had conſented to re-baptization, and without peace, and without charity condemns them for Hereticks. Indeed here was the rareſt mixture and conjunction of unlikelihoods that I have obſerved. Here was error of opinion with much modeſty, and ſweetneſs of temper on one ſide; and on the other, an over-active and impetuous zeal to atteſt a truth: it uſes not to be ſo, for error uſually is ſupported with confidence, and truth ſuppreſſed and diſcountenanced by indifferency. But that it might

appear

appear that the error was not the ſin, but the uncharitableneſs; *Stephen* was accounted a zealous and furious perſon, and * St. *Cyprian* though deceived, yet a very good man, and of great ſanctity. For although every error is to be oppoſed, yet according to the variety of errors, ſo is there variety of proceedings. If it be againſt faith, that is, a deſtruction of any part of the foundation, it is with zeal to be reſiſted, and we have for it an apoſtolical warrant, *contend earneſtly for the faith*; but then as theſe things recede farther from the foundation, our certainty is the leſs, and their neceſſity not ſo much, and therefore it were very fit, that our confidence ſhould be according to our evidence, and our zeal according to our confidence, and our confidence ſhould then be the rule of our communion; and the lightneſs of an article ſhould be conſidered with the weight of a precept of charity. And therefore, there are ſome errors to be reproved, rather by a private friend than a publick cenſure, and the perſons of the men not avoided but admoniſhed, and their doctrine rejected, not their communion; few opinions are of that malignity which are to be rejected with the ſame exterminating ſpirit, and confidence of averſation, with which the firſt teachers of chriſtianity condemned *Ebion*, *Manes*, and *Cerinthus*; and in the condemnation of hereticks, the perſonal iniquity is more conſiderable than the obliquity of the doctrine, not for the rejection of the article, but for cenſuring the perſons; and therefore it is the piety of the man that excuſed St. *Cyprian*, which is a certain argument that it is not the opinion, but the impiety that condemns and makes the heretick. And this was it which *Vincentius Lirinenſis* ſaid in this very caſe

* Vid. S. Aug. l. 2. c. 6. de baptiſ. contra Donat.

of * St. *Cyprian*, *Unius & ejuſdem opinionis (mirum videri poteſt) judicamus authores catholicos, & ſequaces hæreticos. Excuſamus magiſtros, & condemnamus ſcholaſticos. Qui ſcripſerunt libros ſunt hæredes cœli, quorum librorum defenſores detruduntur ad infernum.* Which ſaying, if we confront againſt the ſaying of *Salvian* condemning the firſt authors of the *Arrian* ſect, and acquitting the followers, we are taught by theſe two wiſe men, that an error is not it that ſends a man to hell, but he that begins the Hereſy, and is the author of the ſect, he is the man marked out to ruin; and his followers eſcap'd, when the *Hereſiarch* commenced the error upon pride and ambition, and his followers went after him in ſimplicity of their heart; and ſo it was moſt commonly: but on the contrary, when the firſt man in the opinion was honeſtly and invincibly deceived, as St. *Cyprian* was, and that his ſcholars to maintain their credit, or their ends, maintained the opinion, not for the excellency of the reaſon perſuading, but for the benefit and accruments, or peeviſhneſs, as did the *Donatiſts*, *qui de Cypriani authoritate ſibi carnaliter blandiuntur*, as St. *Auſtin* ſaid of them; then the ſcholars are the hereticks, and the maſter is a catholick. For his error is not the hereſy formally, and an erring perſon may be a catholick. A wicked perſon in his error becomes heretick, when the good man in the ſame error ſhall have all the rewards of faith. For whatever an ill man believes, if he therefore believe it becauſe it ſerves his own ends, be his belief true or falſe, the man hath an heretical mind, for to ſerve his own ends, his mind is prepared to believe a lie. But a good man that believes what according to his light, and upon the uſe of his moral induſtry he

* Adv. hæreſ. c. 2.

thinks

thinks true, whether he hits upon the right or no, becauſe he hath a mind deſirous of truth, and prepared to believe every truth, is therefore acceptable to God, becauſe nothing hindered him from it, but what he could not help, his miſery and his weakneſs, which being imperfections merely natural, which God never puniſhes, he ſtands fair for a bleſſing of his morality, which God always accepts. So that now if *Stephen* had followed the example of God Almighty, or retained but the ſame peaceable ſpirit which his brother of *Carthage* did, he might with more advantage to truth, and reputation both of wiſdom and piety have done his duty in atteſting what he believed to be true; for we are as much bound to be zealous purſuers of peace, as earneſt contenders for the faith. I am ſure more earneſt we ought to be for the peace of the church, than for an article which is not of the faith, as this queſtion of re-baptization was not; for St. *Cyprian* died in belief againſt it, and yet was a catholick, and a martyr for the chriſtian faith.

XXIII. The ſum is this: St. *Cyprian* did right in a wrong cauſe (as it hath been ſince judged) and *Stephen* did ill in a good cauſe; as far then as piety and charity is to be preferred before a true opinion, ſo far is St. *Cyprian*'s practice a better precedent for us, and an example of primitive ſanctity, than the zeal and indiſcretion of *Stephen*: St. *Cyprian* had not learned to forbid to any one a liberty of propheſying or interpretation, if he tranſgreſſed not the foundation of faith and the creed of the apoſtles.

XXIV. Well thus it was, and thus it ought to be in the firſt ages, the faith of Chriſtendom reſted ſtill upon the ſame foundation, and the judgments of Hereſies were accordingly, or were amiſs; but the firſt great violation of this truth

was, when general councils came in, and the ſymbols were enlarged, and new articles were made as much of neceſſity to be believed as the creed of the Apoſtles, and damnation threatned to them that did diſſent, and at laſt the creeds multiplied in number, and in articles, and the liberty of propheſying began to be ſomething reſtrained.

XXV. And this was of ſo much the more force and efficacy becauſe it began upon great reaſon, and in the firſt inſtance, with ſucceſs good enough. For I am much pleaſed with the enlarging of the creed, which the council of *Nice* made, becauſe they enlarged it to my ſenſe; but I am not ſure that others are ſatisfied with it; while we look upon the article they did determine, we ſee all things well enough; but there are ſome wiſe perſonages conſider it in all circumſtances, and think the church had been more happy if ſhe had not been in ſome ſenſe conſtrained to alter the ſimplicity of her faith, and make it more curious and articulate, ſo much that he had need be a ſubtle man to underſtand the very words of the new determinations.

XXVI. For the firſt *Alexander*, biſhop of *Alexandria*, in the preſence of his clergy, treats ſomewhat more curiouſly of the ſecret of the myſterious trinity, and unity, * ſo curiouſly, that *Arius* (who was a ſophiſter too ſubtle as it afterwards appeared) miſunderſtood him, and thought he intended to bring in the Hereſy of *Sabellius*. For while he taught the unity of the trinity, either he did it ſo inartificially, or ſo intricately, that *Arius* thought he did not diſtinguiſh the perſons, when the biſhop intended only the unity of nature. Againſt this *Arius* furiouſly drives, and to confute *Sabellius*, and in him (as he thought)

* Socrat. l. 1. c. 8.

the

the biſhop, diſtinguiſhes the natures too, and ſo to ſecure the article of the trinity, deſtroys the unity. It was the firſt time the queſtion was diſputed in the world, and in ſuch myſterious niceties, poſſibly every wiſe man may underſtand ſomething, but few can underſtand all, and therefore ſuſpect what they underſtand not, and are furiouſly zealous for that part of it which they do perceive. Well, it happened in theſe, as always in ſuch caſes, in things men underſtand not they are moſt impetuous; and becauſe ſuſpicion is a thing infinite in degrees, for it hath nothing to determine it, a ſuſpicious perſon is ever moſt violent, for his fears are worſe than the thing feared, becauſe the thing is limited, but his fears are not; † ſo that upon this, grew contentions on both ſides, and tumults, railing and reviling each other; and then the laity were drawn into parts, and the *Meletians* abetted the wrong part, and the right part fearing to be overborn, did any thing that was next at hand to ſecure itſelf. Now then they that lived in that age, that underſtood the men, that ſaw how quiet the church was before this ſtir, how miſerably rent now, what little benefit from the queſtion, what ſchiſm about it, gave other cenſures of the buſineſs than we ſince have done, who only look upon the article determined with truth and approbation of the church generally, ſince that time. But the epiſtle of *Conſtantine* to *Alexander* and *Arius*, * tells the truth, and chides them both for commenting the queſtion, *Alexander* for broaching it, *Arius* for taking it up; and although this be true, that it had been better for the church it never had begun, yet being begun, what is to be done in it? of this alſo in that admirable epiſtle,

* Lib. 1. c. 6. † Cap. 7.

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we have the emperors judgment (I ſuppoſe not without the advice and privity of *Haſius* biſhop of Corduba, whom the emperor loved and truſted much, and employed in the delivery of the letters.) " For firſt he calls it a certain vain piece " of a queſtion, ill begun and more unadviſedly " publiſhed, a queſtion which no law or eccleſiaſ- " tical canon defineth, a fruitleſs contention, the " product of idle brains, a matter ſo nice, ſo ob- " ſcure, ſo intricate, that it was neither to be ex- " plicated by the clergy, nor underſtood by the " people, a diſpute of words, a doctrine inex- " plicable, but moſt dangerous when taught, leſt " it introduce diſcord or blaſphemy; and there- " fore, the objector was raſh, and the anſwerer " unadviſed; for it concerned not the ſubſtance " of faith, or the worſhip of God, nor any chief " commandment of ſcripture, and therefore, why " ſhould it be the matter of diſcord? For though " the matter be grave; yet becauſe neither ne- " ceſſary, nor explicable, the contention is trifling " and toyiſh. And therefore, as the philoſophers " of the ſame ſect, though differing in explica- " tion of an opinion, yet more love for the " unity of their profeſſion, than diſagree for the " difference of opinion; ſo ſhould chriſtians be- " lieving in the ſame God, retaining the ſame " faith, having the ſame hopes, oppoſed by the " ſame enemies, not fall at variance upon ſuch " diſputes, conſidering our underſtandings are " not all alike; and therefore, neither can our " opinions in ſuch myſterious articles: ſo that " the matter being of no great importance, but " vain, and a toy in reſpect of the excellent " bleſſings of peace and charity, it were good " that *Alexander* and *Arius* ſhould leave contending, " keep their opinions to themſelves, aſk each " other forgiveneſs, and give mutual toleration."

This

This is the ſubſtance of *Conſtantine*'s letter, and it contains in it much reaſon, if he did not undervalue the queſtion; but it ſeems it was not then thought a queſtion of faith, but of nicety of diſpute; they both did believe one God, and the holy Trinity. Now then that he afterward called the *Nicene* council, it was upon occaſion of the vileneſs of the men of the *Arian* part, their eternal diſcord and pertinacious wrangling, and to bring peace into the church; that was the neceſſity; and in order to it was the determination of the article. But for the article itſelf, the letter declares what opinion he had of that, and this grave letter was by *Socrates* called *a wonderful exhortation, full of grace and ſober council:* and ſuch as *Hoſius* himſelf, who was the meſſenger, preſſed with all earneſtneſs, with all the ſkill and authority he had.

XXVII. I know the opinion the world had of the article afterward is quite differing from this cenſure given of it before; and therefore they have put it into the creed (I ſuppoſe) to bring the world to unity, and to prevent ſedition in this queſtion, and the accidental blaſphemies, which were occaſioned by their curious talkings of ſuch ſecret myſteries, and by their illiterate reſolutions. But although the article was determined with an excellent ſpirit, and we all with much reaſon profeſs to believe it; yet it is another conſideration, whether or no it might not have been better determined, if with more ſimplicity; and another yet, whether or no ſince many of the biſhops who did believe this thing, yet did not like the nicety and curioſity of expreſſing it, it had not been more agreeable to the practiſe of the Apoſtles, to have made a determination of the article by way of expoſition of the Apoſtles creed, and to have left this in a reſcript, for record to all poſterity,

terity, and not to have enlarged the creed with it: for ſince it was an explication of an article of the creed of the Apoſtles, as ſermons are of places of ſcripture, it was thought by ſome, that ſcripture might with good profit, and great truth be expounded, and yet the expoſitions not put into the canon, or go for ſcripture, but that left ſtill in the naked original ſimplicity, and ſo much the rather ſince that explication was farther from the foundation, and though moſt certainly true, yet not penned by ſo infallible a ſpirit, as was that of the Apoſtles; and therefore not with ſo much evidence, as certainty. And if they had pleaſed, they might have made uſe of an admirable precedent to this and many other great and good purpoſes, no leſs than of the bleſſed Apoſtles, whoſe ſymbol they might have imitated, with as much ſimplicity as they did the expreſſions of ſcripture, when they firſt compoſed it. For it is moſt conſiderable, that although in reaſon every clauſe in the creed ſhould be clear, and ſo inopportune and unapt to variety of interpretation, that there might be no place left for ſeveral ſenſes or variety of expoſitions: yet when they thought fit to inſert ſome myſteries into the creed, which in ſcripture were expreſſed in ſo myſterious words, that the laſt and moſt explicit ſenſe would ſtill be latent, yet they who (if ever any did) underſtood all the ſenſes and ſecrets of it, thought it not fit to uſe any words but the words of ſcripture, particularly in the articles of [Chriſt's deſcending into hell, and ſitting at the right hand of God] to ſhew us that thoſe creeds are beſt which keep the very words of ſcripture; and that faith is beſt which hath greateſt ſimplicity, and that it is better in all caſes humbly to ſubmit, than curiouſly to enquire and pry into the myſtery under the cloud, and to hazard our faith by improving

improving our knowledge: If the *Nicene* fathers had done ſo too, poſſibly the church would never have repented it.

XXVIII. And indeed the experience, the church had afterwards, ſhewed that the biſhops and prieſts were not ſatisfied in all circumſtances, nor the ſchiſm appeaſed, nor the perſons agreed, nor the canons accepted, nor the article underſtood, nor any thing right, but when they were overborn with authority, which authority when the ſcales turned, did the ſame ſervice and promotion to the contrary.

XXIX. But it is conſiderable, that it was not the article or the thing itſelf that troubled the diſagreeing perſons, but the manner of repreſenting it. For the five diſſenters, *Euſebius* of *Nicomedia*, *Theognis*, *Maris*, *Theonas*, and *Secundus*, believed Chriſt to be very God of very God, but the clauſe of ὁμοούσιον they derided, as being perſuaded by their logick, that he was neither of the ſubſtance of the Father, by diviſion as a piece of a lump, nor derivation as children from their parents, nor by production as buds from trees, and no body could tell them any other way at that time, and that made the fire to burn ſtill. And that was it I ſaid; if the article had been with more ſimplicity, and leſs nicety determined; charity would have gained more, and faith would have loſt nothing. And we ſhall find the wiſeſt of them all, for ſo *Euſebius Pamphilus* was eſteemed, publiſhed a creed or confeſſion in the ſynod*, and though he and all the reſt believed that great myſtery of godlineſs, *God manifeſted in the fleſh*, yet he was not fully ſatisfied, nor ſo ſoon of the clauſe of *one ſubſtance*, till he had done a little violence to his own underſtanding;

* Vide Sozomen. lib. 2. cap. 18.

for

for even when he had ſubſcribed to the clauſe of *one ſubſtance*, he does it with a proteſtation, that *heretofore he never had been acquainted, nor accuſtomed himſelf to ſuch ſpeeches.* And the ſenſe of the word was either ſo ambiguous, or their meaning ſo uncertain, that * *Andreas Fricius* does with ſome probability diſpute that the *Nicene* fathers by ὁμοουσιον, did mean *Patris ſimilitudinem, non eſſentiæ unitatem, Sylva.* 4. *c.* 1. And it was ſo well underſtood by perſonages diſintereſted, that when *Arius* and *Euzoius* had confeſſed Chriſt to be *Deus verbum*, without inſerting the clauſe of *one ſubſtance*, the emperor by his letter approved of his faith, and reſtored him to his country and office, and the communion of the church. And a long time after, although the article was believed with † nicety enough, yet when they added more words ſtill to the myſtery, and brought in the word ὑποστασις, ſaying there were three hypoſtaſes in the holy trinity, it was ſo long before it could be underſtood, that it was believed therefore, becauſe they would not oppoſe their ſuperiors, or diſturb the peace of the church, in things which they thought could not be underſtood: inſomuch that St. *Hierom* writ to *Damaſcus*, in theſe words: *Diſcerne ſi placet obſecro, non timebo tres hypoſtaſes dicere, ſi jubetis*; and again, *Obteſtor beatitudinem tuam per crucifixum, mundi ſalutem, per* ὁμοουσιον *Trinitatem, ut mihi epiſtolis tuis, ſive tacendarum ſive dicendarum hypoſtaſeon detur authoritas.*

XXX. But without all queſtion, the fathers determined the queſtion with much truth, though

* Socrat. lib. 1. cap. 26.

† Non imprudenter dixit, qui curioſæ explicationi hujus myſterii dictum Ariſtonis Philoſophi applicuit. Helleborus niger ſi craſſius ſumatur purgat & ſanat. Quum autem teritur & comminuitur, ſuffocat.

I cannot

I cannot ſay, the arguments upon which they built their decrees, were ſo good as the concluſion itſelf was certain; but that which in this caſe is conſiderable, is whether or no they did well in putting a curſe to the foot of their decree, and the decree itſelf into the ſymbol, as if it had been of the ſame neceſſity? for the curſe *Euſebius Pamphilus* could hardly find in his heart to ſubſcribe, at laſt he did; but with this clauſe that he ſubſcribed it becauſe the form of curſe did only *forbid men to acquaint themſelves with foreign ſpeeches and unwritten languages*, whereby confuſion and diſcord is brought into the church. So that it was not ſo much a magiſterial high aſſertion of the article, as an endeavour to ſecure the peace of the church. And to the ſame purpoſe for ought I know, the fathers compoſed a form of confeſſion, not as a preſcript rule of faith to build the hopes of our ſalvation on, but as a *teſſera* of that communion which by publick authority was therefore eſtabliſhed upon thoſe articles becauſe the articles were true, though not of prime neceſſity, and becauſe that unity of confeſſion was judged, as things then ſtood, the beſt preſerver of the unity of minds.

XXXI. But I ſhall obſerve this, that although the *Nicene* fathers in that caſe at that time, and in that conjucture of circumſtances did well (and yet their approbation is made by after ages *ex poſt facto*) yet if this precedent had been followed by all councils (and certainly they had equal power, if they had thought it equally reaſonable) and that they had put all their decrees into the creed, as ſome have done ſince, to what a volume had the creed by this time ſwelled? and all the houſe had run into foundation, nothing left for ſuperſtructures. But that they did not, it appears 1ſt that ſince they thought all their decrees true, yet they

they did not think them all neceſſary, at leaſt not in that degree, and that they publiſhed ſuch decrees, they did it *ad declarandum, non imperandum*, as doctors in their chairs, not maſters of other men's faith and conſciences. 2 And yet there is ſome more modeſty, or warineſs or neceſſity (what ſhall I call it?) than this comes to: for why are not all controverſies determined? but even when general aſſemblies of prelates have been, ſome controverſies that have been very vexatious, have been pretermitted, and others of leſs conſequence have been determined: Why did never any general council condemn in expreſs ſentence the *Pelagian* Hereſy, that great peſt, that ſubtle infection of Chriſtendom? and yet divers general councils did aſſemble while the Hereſy was in the world. Both theſe caſes in ſeveral degrees leave men in their liberty of believing and propheſying. The latter proclaims that all controverſies cannot be determined to ſufficient purpoſes, and the firſt declares that thoſe that are, are not all of them matters of faith, and themſelves are not ſo ſecure, but they may be deceived; and therefore poſſibly it were better it were let alone; for if the latter leaves them divided in their opinions, yet their communions, and therefore probably their charities, are not divided; but the former divides their communions, and hinders their intereſt; and yet for ought is certain, the accuſed perſon is the better catholick. And yet after all this, it is not ſafety enough to ſay, let the council or prelates, determine articles warily, ſeldom, with great caution, and with much ſweetneſs and modeſty. For though this be better than to do it raſhly, frequently and furiouſly; yet if we once tranſgreſs the bounds ſet us by the Apoſtles in their creed, and not only preach other truths, but determine them *pro tribunali* as well as *pro cathedra*, although there

there be no error in the subject matter (as in *Nice* there was none), yet if the next ages say they will determine another article with as much care and caution, and pretend as great a necessity, there is no hindering them, but by giving reasons against it; and so like enough they might have done against the decreeing the article of *Nice*; yet that is not sufficient; for since the authority of the *Nicene* council hath grown to the heighth of a mountainous prejudice against him that should say it was ill done, the same reason and the same necessity may be pretended by any age and in any council, and they think themselves warranted by the great precedent at *Nice*, to proceed as peremptorily as they did; but then if any other assembly of learned men may possibly be deceived, were it not better they should spare the labour, than that they should with so great pomp and solemnities engage men's persuasions, and determine an article which after ages must rescind; for therefore most certainly in their own age, the point with safety of faith and salvation, might have been disputed and disbelieved: And that many mens faiths have been tied up by acts and decrees of councils for those articles in which the next age did see a liberty had better been preserved, because an error was determined, we shall afterward receive a more certain account.

XXXII. And therefore the council of *Nice* did well, and *Constantinople* did well, so did *Ephesus* and *Chalcedon*; but it is because the articles were truly determined (for that is part of my belief;) but who is sure it should be so beforehand, and whether the points there determined were necessary or no to be believed or to be determined, if peace had been concerned in it through the faction and division of the parties, I suppose the judgment of *Constantine* the emperor and the famous *Hosius*

of *Corduba* is ſufficient to inſtruct us, whoſe authority I rather urge than reaſons, becauſe it is a prejudice and not a reaſon I am to contend againſt.

XXXIII. So that ſuch determinations and publiſhing of confeſſions with authority of prince and biſhop, are ſometimes of very good uſe for the peace of the church, and they are good alſo to determine the judgment of indifferent perſons, whoſe reaſons of either ſide, are not too great to weigh down the probability of that authority: But for perſons of confident and imperious underſtandings, they on whoſe ſide the determination is, are armed with a prejudice againſt the other, and with a weapon to affront them, but with no more to convince them; and they againſt whom the deciſion is, do the more readily betake themſelves to the defenſive, and are engaged upon conteſtation and publick enmities, for ſuch articles which either might ſafely have been unknown, or with much charity diſputed. Therefore the *Nicene* council, although it have the advantage of an acquired and preſcribing authority, yet it muſt not become a precedent to others, leſt the inconveniences of multiplying more articles upon as great pretence of reaſon as then, make the act of the *Nicene* fathers in ſtraightening propheſy, and enlarging the creed, become accidentally an inconvenience. The firſt reſtraint, although if it had been complained of, might poſſibly have been better conſidered of; yet the inconvenience is not viſible, till it comes by way of precedent to uſher in more. It is like an arbitrary power, which although by the ſame reaſon it take ſixpence from the ſubject, it may take a hundred pounds, and then a thouſand, and then all, yet ſo long as it is within the firſt bounds, the inconvenience is not ſo great; but when it comes to be a precedent

or

or argument for more, then the firſt may juſtly be complained of, as having in it that reaſon in the principle, which brought the inconvenience in the ſequel; and we have ſeen very ill conſequents from innocent beginnings.

XXXIV. And the inconveniences which might poſſibly ariſe from this precedent, thoſe wiſe perſonages alſo did fore-ſee, and therefore although they took liberty in *Nice*, to add ſome articles, or at leaſt more explicitly to declare the firſt creed, yet they then would have all the world to reſt upon that and go no farther, as believing that to be ſufficient. St. *Athanaſius* declares their opinion, ἡ γαρ εν αυτῃ παρα των παλαιων κατα τας θειας γραφας, ὁμολογηθεισα πιστις, αυταρκης εστι προς ἀνατοπην μεν πασης ασεβειας, συστασιν δε της ευσεβειας εν Χριστῳ πιστεως.* That faith which thoſe fathers there confeſſed, was ſufficient for the refutation of all impiety, and the eſtabliſhment of all faith in Chriſt and true religion. And therefore there was a famous epiſtle † written by *Zeno* the emperor, called the Ἑνωτικον or the epiſtle of reconciliation, in which all diſagreeing intereſts are entreated to agree in the *Nicene* ſymbol, and a promiſe made upon that condition to communicate with all other ſects, adding withall, that the church ſhould never receive any other ſymbol than that which was compoſed by the *Nicene* fathers. And however *Honorius* was condemned for a *Monothelite*; yet in one of the epiſtles which the ſixth ſynod alledged againſt him, (*viz.* the ſecond) he gave them council that would have done the church as much ſervice as the determination of the article did; for he adviſed them not to be curious in their diſputings, nor dogmatical in their

* Epiſt. ad Epict. † Euagr. l. 3. c. 14.

determinations about that queſtion, and becauſe the church was not uſed to diſpute in that queſtion, it were better to preſerve the ſimplicity of faith, than to enſlave men's conſciences by a new article. And when the emperor *Conſtantius* was by his faction engaged in a contrary practice, the inconvenience and unreaſonableneſs was ſo great, that a prudent heathen obſerved and noted it in this character of *Conſtantius*, *Chriſtianam religionem abſolutam & ſimplicem* [N. B.] *anili ſuperſtitione confudit. In qua ſcrutanda perplexius quam in componenda gratius, excitavit diſſidia quæ progreſſa fuſius aluit concertatione verborum dum ritum omnem ad ſuum trahere conatur arbitrium.*

XXXV. And yet men are more led by example than either by reaſon or by precept; for in the council of *Conſtantinople* one article *de novo & integro* was added, viz. *I believe one baptiſm for the remiſſion of ſins*; and then again they were ſo confident, that that confeſſion of faith was ſo abſolutely intire, and that no man ever after ſhould need to add any thing to the integrity of faith, that the fathers of the council of *Epheſus* pronounced anathema to all thoſe that ſhould add any thing to the creed of *Conſtantinople*. And yet for all this the church of *Rome* in a ſynod at *Gentilly* added the clauſe of *Filioque*, to the article of the proceſſion of the holy ghoſt; and what they have done ſince all the world knows, *Exempla non conſiſtunt, ſed quamvis in tenuem recepta tramitem, latiſſime evagandi ſibi faciunt poteſtatem.* All men were perſuaded that it was moſt reaſonable the limits of faith ſhould be no more enlarged; but yet they enlarged it themſelves, and bound others from doing it, like an intemperate father, who becauſe he knows he does ill himſelf, enjoins temperance to his ſon, but continues to be intemperate himſelf.

XXXVI.

XXXVI. But now if I ſhould be queſtioned concerning the ſymbol of *Athanaſius* (for we ſee the *Nicene* ſymbol was the father of many more, ſome twelve or thirteen ſymbols in the ſpace of a hundred years) I confeſs I cannot ſee that moderate ſentence and gentleneſs of charity in his preface and concluſion as there was in the *Nicene* creed. Nothing there but damnation and periſhing everlaſtingly, unleſs the article of the trinity be believed, as it is there with curioſity and minute particularities explained. Indeed *Athanaſius* had been ſoundly vexed on one ſide, and much cryed up on the other; and therefore it is not ſo much wonder for him to be ſo decretory and ſevere in his cenſure; for nothing could more aſcertain his friends to him, and diſ-repute his enemies, than the belief of that damnatory appendix; but that does not juſtify the thing. For the articles themſelves, I am moſt heartily perſuaded of the truth of them, and yet I dare not ſay all that are not ſo, are irrevocably damned, becauſe *citra hoc ſymbolum*, the faith of the apoſtles creed is intire, and he that believeth and is baptiſed ſhall be ſaved, that is, he that believeth ſuch a belief as is ſufficient diſpoſition to be baptized, that faith with the ſacrament is ſufficient for heaven. Now the apoſtles creed does one; why therefore do not both intitle us to the promiſe? Beſides, if it were conſidered concerning *Athanaſius* creed, how many people underſtand it not, how contrary to natural reaſon it ſeems, how little the * ſcripture ſays of thoſe curioſities of explication, and how tradition was not clear on his ſide for the article itſelf, much leſs for thoſe forms and minutes (how himſelf is put to make an anſwer, and

* Vide Hoſium de author. S. Script. l. 3. p. 53. & Gordon. Huntlæum. Tom. 1. controv. 1. de verbo Dei, cap. 19.

excuſe for the * fathers ſpeaking in favour of the *Arrians*, at leaſt ſo ſeemingly, that the *Arrians* appealed to them for tryal, and the offer was declined) and after all this that the *Nicene* creed itſelf went not ſo far, neither in article, nor anathema nor explication, it had not been amiſs if the final judgement had been left to Jeſus Chriſt; for he is appointed judge of all the world, and he ſhall judge the people righteouſly, for he knows every truth, the degree of every neceſſity, and all excuſes that do leſſen, or take away the nature or malice of a crime; all which I think *Athanaſius* though a very good man, did not know ſo well as to warrant ſuch a ſentence. And put caſe the hereſy there condemned be damnable, (as it is damnable enough) yet a man may maintain an opinion that is in itſelf damnable, and yet he not knowing it ſo, and being invincibly led into it may go to heaven; his opinion ſhall burn, and himſelf be ſaved. But however, I find no opinions in ſcripure called damnable, but what are impious *in materia practica*, or directly deſtructive of the faith or body of chriſtianity, ſuch of which St. † *Peter* ſpeaks, *bringing in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them, theſe are the falſe prophets who out of covetouſneſs make merchandiſe of you through cozening words.* Such as theſe are truly hereſies, and ſuch as theſe are certainly damnable. But becauſe there are no degrees either of truth or falſhood, every true propoſition being alike

* Vide Gretſer. & Tanner. in coloq. Ratiſbon. Euſebium fuiſſe Arrianum ait. Perron. lib. 3. cap. 2. contre le Roy Jaques. Idem ait Originem negaſſe Divinitatem filii & Spir. S. l. 2. c. 7. de Euchar. contra. Dupleſſiſ. idem cap. 5. obſerv. 4. ait. Irenæum talia dixiſſe quæ qui hodie diceret, pro Arriano reputaretur. vide etiam Fiſher. in reſp. ad 9. Quæſt Jacobi Reg. & Epiphan. in hæreſ. 69.

† 2 Peter, 2, 1.

true;

true; that an error is more or leſs damnable, is not told us in ſcripture, but is determined by the man and his manners, by circumſtance and accidents; and therefore the cenſure in the preface and end, are arguments of his zeal and ſtrength of his perſuaſion; but they are extrinſecal and accidental to the articles, and might as well have been ſpared. And indeed to me it ſeems very hard to put uncharitableneſs into the creed, and ſo to make it become an article of faith, though perhaps this very thing was no faith of *Athanaſius*, who if we may believe *Aquinas*, made this manifeſtation of faith, *non per modum ſymboli, ſed per modum doctrinæ*,* that is, if I underſtood him right, not with a purpoſe to impoſe it upon others, but with confidence to declare his own belief; and that it was preſcribed to others as a creed, was the act of the biſhops of *Rome*; ſo he ſaid, nay, poſſibly it was none of his: ſo ſaid the patriarch of of C. P. *Meletius* about one hundred and thirty years ſince, in his epiſtle to *John Douza*, *Athanaſio falſo adſcriptum ſymbolum cum Pontificum Rom. appendice illa adulteratum, luce lucidius conteſtamur.* And it is more than probable that he ſaid true, becauſe this creed was written originally in latin, which in all reaſon *Athanaſius* did not, and it was tranſlated into greek, it being apparent that the latin copy is but one, but the greek is various, there being three editions or tranſlations rather, expreſſed by *Genebrard, lib. 3. de Trinit.* But in this particular, who liſt, may better ſatisfy himſelf in a diſputation *de ſymbolo Athanaſii*, printed at *Wertzburg* 1590, ſuppoſed to be written by *Serrarius* or *Clencherus*.

XXXVII. And yet I muſt obſerve that this ſymbol of *Athanaſius*, and that other of *Nice*,

* D. Tho. 22 æ. q. 1. artic. 1. ad. 3 um.

offer not at any new articles; they only pretend to a further explication of the articles apoſtolical, which is a certain confirmation that they did not believe more articles to be of briefe neceſſary to ſalvation: if they intended theſe further explications to be as neceſſary as the dogmatical articles of the apoſtles creed, I know not how to anſwer all that may be objected againſt that; but the advantage that I ſhall gather from their not proceeding to new matters, is laid out ready for me in the words of *Athanaſius*, ſaying of this creed [*this is the catholick faith*] and if his authority be good, or his ſaying true, or he the author, then no man can ſay of any other article, that it is a part of the catholick faith, or that the catholick faith can be enlarged beyond the contents of that ſymbol; and therefore it is a ſtrange boldneſs in the church of *Rome*, firſt to add twelve new articles, and then to add the appendix of * *Athanaſius* to the end of them, *This is the catholick faith, without which no man can be ſaved.*

XXXVIII. But ſo great an example of ſo excellent a man, hath been either miſtaken or followed with too much greedineſs, all the world in factions, all damning one another, each party damned by all the reſt, and there is no diſagreeing in opinion from any man that is in love with his own opinion, but damnation preſently to all that diſagree. A ceremony and a rite hath cauſed ſeveral churches to excommunicate each other, as in the matter of the ſaturday faſt, and keeping Eaſter. But what the ſpirits of men are when they are exaſperated in a queſtion and difference of religion, as they call it, though the thing itſelf may be moſt inconſiderable, is very evident in that requeſt of Pope *Innocent* the Third, deſi-

* Bulla Pii quarti ſupra forma juramenti profeſſionis fidei, in fin. Conc. Trident.

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ſiring of the Greeks (but reaſonably a man would think) that they would not ſo much hate the Roman manner of conſecrating in unleavened bread, as to waſh, and ſcrape, and pare the altars after a Roman prieſt had conſecrated. Nothing more furious than a miſtaken zeal, and the actions of a ſcrupulous and abuſed conſcience. When men think every thing to be their faith and their religion, commonly they are ſo buſy in trifles and ſuch impertinences in which the ſcene of their miſtake lies, that they neglect the greater things of the law, charity, and compliances, and the gentleneſs of Chriſtian communion; for this is the great principle of miſchief, and yet is not more pernicious than unreaſonable.

XXX. For I demand: Can any man ſay and juſtify that the Apoſtles did deny communion to any man that believed the Apoſtles creed, and lived a good life? And dare any man tax that proceeding of remiſſneſs, and indifferency in religion? And ſince our bleſſed Saviour promiſed ſalvation to him that *believeth* (and the Apoſtles when they gave this word the greateſt extent, enlarged it not beyond the borders of the creed) how can any man warrant the condemning of any man to the flames of hell that is ready to die in atteſtation of this faith, ſo expounded and made explicit by the Apoſtles, and lives accordingly? And to this purpoſe it was excellently ſaid by a wiſe and pious prelate, St. *Hilary*, *Non per difficiles nos Deus ad beatam vitam quæſtiones vocat, &c. In abſoluto nobis & facili eſt æternitas; Jeſum ſuſcitatum a mortuis, per Deum credere, & ipſum eſſe Dominum confiteri, &c.* Theſe are are the articles which we muſt believe, which are the ſufficient and adequate object of that faith which is required of us

* L. 10. de Trin. ad finem.

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in order to ſalvation. And therefore it was, that when the biſhops of *Iſtria* deſerted the communion of pope *Pelagius*, *in rouſo triam capitulorum*, he gives them an account of his faith by recitation of the creed, and by aſſerting the four general councils, and is confident upon this that *de fidei firmitate nulla poterit eſſe quæſtio vel ſuſpicio generari*; let the Apoſtles creed, eſpecially ſo explicated, be but ſecured, and all faith is ſecured; and yet that explication too was leſs neceſſary than the articles themſelves; for the explication was but accidental, but the articles even before the explication were accounted a ſufficient inlet to the kingdom of heaven.

XL. And that there was ſecurity enough, in the ſimple believing the firſt articles, is very certain amongſt them, and by their principles, who allow of an implicit faith to ſerve moſt perſons to the greateſt purpoſes, for if the creed did contain in it the whole faith, and that other articles were in it implicitly, (for ſuch is the doctrine of the ſchool, and particularly of *Aquinas* ‡) then he that explicitly believes all the creed, does implicitly believe all the articles contained it, and then it is better the implication ſhould ſtill continue, than that by any explication (which is ſimply unneceſſary) the church ſhould be troubled with queſtions, and uncertain determinations, and factions enkindled, and animoſities ſet on foot, and mens ſoul endangered, who before were ſecured by the explicit belief of all that the Apoſtles required as neceſſary, which belief alſo did ſecure them for all the reſt, becauſe it implied the belief of whatſoever was virtually in the firſt articles, if ſuch belief ſhould by chance be neceſſary.

* Concil. tom. 4. Edit. Paris. p. 473.

‡ 22 æ. q. 1. a. 10. cap.

XLI. The

XLI. The ſum of this diſcourſe is this, if we take an eſtimate of the nature of faith from the dictates and promiſes evangelical, and from the practice apoſtolical, the nature of faith and its integrity conſiſts in ſuch propoſitions which make the foundation of hope and charity, that which is ſufficient to make us to do honour to Chriſt, and to obey him, and to encourage us in both; and this is compleated in the Apoſtles creed. And ſince contraries are of the ſame extent, Hereſy is to be judged by its proportion and analogy to faith, and that is Hereſy only which is againſt faith. Now becauſe faith is not only a precept of doctrines, but of manners and holy life, whatſoever is either oppoſite to an article of creed, or teaches ill life, that's Hereſy; but all thoſe propoſitions which are extrinſecal to theſe two conſiderations, be they true or be they falſe, make not Hereſy, nor the man an Heretick; and therefore however he may be an erring perſon, yet he is to be uſed accordingly, pitied and inſtructed, not condemned or excommunicated; and this is the reſult of the firſt ground, the conſideration of the nature of faith and Hereſy.

SECTION III.

Of the difficulty and uncertainty of arguments from ſcripture, in queſtions not ſimply neceſſary, nor literally determined.

I. GOD who diſpoſes of all things ſweetly and according to the nature and capacity of things and perſons, had made thoſe only neceſſary, which he had taken care ſhould be ſufficiently propounded to all perſons of whom he required

required the explicit belief. And therefore all the articles of faith are clearly and plainly set down in ſcripture, and the goſpel is not hid *niſi pereuntibus* ſaith St. *Paul*; πασης γαρ αρειης φαρμακησιν, και κακιας ἀπασης προφην εν ταυταις ευρισκομεν, ſaith *Damaſcus*, and that ſo manifeſtly that no man can be ignorant of the foundation of faith without his own apparent fault. And this is acknowledged by all wiſe and good men, and is evident, beſides the reaſonableneſs of the thing, in the teſtimonies of ſaints [b] *Auſtin*, [c] *Hierome*, [d] *Chryſoſtome*, [e] *Fulgentius*, [f] *Hugo de Sancto Victore*, [g] *Theodoret*, [h] *Lactantius*, [i] *Theophilus Antiochenus*, [k] *Aquinas*, and the latter ſchoolmen. And God hath done more; for many things which are only profitable, are alſo ſet down ſo plainly, that (as St. *Auſtin* ſays) *nemo inde haurire non poſſit, ſi modo ad hauriendum devote ac pie accedat (ubi ſupra de util. cred. c. 6.)* but of ſuch things there is no queſtion commenced in Chriſtendom, and if there were, it cannot but be a crime and human intereſt, that are the authors of ſuch diſputes, and therefore theſe cannot be ſimple errors, but always hereſies, becauſe the principle of them is a perſonal ſin.

II. But beſides theſe things which are ſo plainly ſet down, ſome for doctrine as St. *Paul* ſays, that is, for articles and foundation of faith, ſome for inſtruction, ſome for reproof, ſome for comfort, that is, in matters practical and ſpeculative of ſeveral tempers and conſtitutions, there are innumerable places containing in them great myſteries, but yet either ſo enwrapped with a cloud, or ſo darkened with umbrages, or heightened with ex-

[a] Orthod. fidei. lib. 4. c. 18. [b] Super Pſal. 88. & de util. cred. c. 6. [c] Super Iſa. c. 19. & in Pſal. 86. [d] Homil. 3. in Theſſ. Ep. 2. [e] Serm. de confeſſ. [f] Miſcel. 2. l. 1. t. 46. [g] In Gen. ap. Struch. p. 87. [h] C. 6. c. 21. [i] Ad Antioch. l. 2. p. 918. [k] Par. 1. q. 1. art. 9.

preſſions

preſſions, or ſo covered with allegories and garments of rhetorick, ſo profound in the matter, or ſo altered or made intricate in the manner, in the clothing and in the dreſſing, that God may ſeem to have left them as trials of our induſtry, and arguments of our imperfections, and incentives to the longings after heaven, and the clearer revelations of eternity, and as occaſions and opportunities of our mutual charity and toleration to each other, and humility in ourſelves, rather than the repoſitories of faith, and furniture of creeds, and articles of belief.

III. For wherever the word of God is kept, whether in ſcripture alone, or alſo in tradition, he that conſiders that the meaning of the one, and the truth or certainty of the other are things of great queſtion, will ſee a neceſſity in theſe things (which are the ſubject matter of moſt of the queſtions of Chriſtendom) that men ſhould hope to be excuſed by an implicit faith in God Almighty. For when there are in the explications of ſcripture ſo many commentaries, ſo many ſenſes and interpretations, ſo many volumes in all ages, and all, like mens faces, exactly none like another, either this difference and inconvenience is abſolutely no fault at all, or if it be, it is excuſable, by a mind prepared to conſent in that truth which God intended. And this I call an implicit faith in God, which is certainly of as great excellency as an implicit faith in any man or company of men. Becauſe they who do require an implicit faith in the church for articles leſs neceſſary, and excuſe the want of explicit faith by the implicit, do require an implicit faith in the church, becauſe they believe that God hath required of them to have a mind prepared to believe whatever the church ſays; which becauſe it is a propoſition of no abſolute certainty,

whoſoever

whoſoever does in readineſs of mind believe all that God ſpake, does alſo believe that ſufficiently, if it be fitting to be believed, that is, if it be true, and if God hath ſaid ſo; for he hath the ſame obedience of underſtanding in this as in the other. But becauſe it is not ſo certain God hath tyed him in all things to believe that which is called the church, and that it is certain that we muſt believe God in all things, and yet neither know all that either God hath revealed or the church taught, it is better to take the certain than the uncertain, to believe God rather than man, eſpecially ſince if God hath bound us to believe men, our abſolute ſubmiſſion to God does involve that, and there is no inconvenience in the world this way, but that we implicitly believe one article more, viz, the churches authority or infallibity, which may well be pardoned, becauſe it ſecures our believe of all the reſt, and we are ſure if we believe all that God ſaid explicitly or implicitly, we alſo believe the church implicitly in caſe we are bound to it; but we are not certain, that if we believe any company of men whom we call the church, that we therefore obey God and believe what he hath ſaid. But however, if this will not help us, there is no help for us, but good fortune or abſolute predeſtination; for by choice and induſtry, no man can ſecure himſelf that in all the myſteries of religion taught in ſcripture he ſhall certainly underſtand and explicitly believe that ſenſe, that God intended. For to this purpoſe there are many conſiderations.

IV. 1. There are ſo many thouſands of copies that were writ by perſons of ſeveral intereſts and perſuaſions, ſuch different underſtandings and tempers, ſuch diſtinct abilities and weakneſſes, that it is no wonder there is ſo great a variety of readings

readings both in the Old Teſtament and in the New. In the Old Teſtament, the Jews pretend that the Chriſtians have corrupted many places, on purpoſe to make ſymphony between both the Teſtaments. On the other ſide, the Chriſtians have had ſo much reaſon to ſuſpect the Jews, that when *Aquila* had tranſlated the bible in their ſchools, and had been taught by them, they rejected the edition many of them, and ſome of them called it hereſy to follow it. And *Juſtin Martyr* juſtified it to *Tryphon*, that the Jews had defalked many ſayings from the books of the old prophets, and amongſt the reſt, he inſtances in that of the pſalm, *dicite in nationibus quia Dominus regnavit a ligno* *. The laſt words they have cut off, and prevailed ſo far in it, that to this day none of our bibles have it; but if they ought not to have it, then *Juſtin Martyr*'s bible had more in it than it ſhould have, for there it was; ſo that a fault there was either under or over. But however, there are infinite readings in the New Teſtament (for in that I will inſtance) ſome whole verſes in one that are not in another, and there was in ſome copies of St. *Mark*'s goſpel in the laſt chapter a whole verſe, a chapter it was antiently called, that is not found in our bibles, as St. *Hieron. ad Hedibiam*, q. 3. notes. The words he repeats, *lib.* 2. *contra Polygamos*. *Et illi ſatis faciebant dicentes, ſæculum iſtud iniquitatis & incredulitatis ſubſtantia eſt, quæ non ſinit per immundos ſpiritus veram Dei apprehendi virtutem, idcirco jam nunc revela juſtitiam tuam.* Theſe words are thought by ſome, to ſavour of *Manicheiſme*, and for ought I can find were therefore rejected out of many Greek copies, and at laſt out of the Latin. Now ſuppoſe that a *Manichee* in diſputation ſhould urge this place, having found it in his bible, if

* Pſal. xcvi. 10.

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a Catholick ſhould anſwer him by ſaying it is apochrycal, and not found in divers Greek copies, might not the *Manichee* aſk how it came in, if it was not the word of God, and if it was, how came it out; and at laſt take the ſame liberty of rejecting any other authority which ſhall be alledged againſt him; if he can find any copy that may favour him, however that favour be procured; and did not the *Ebionites* reject all the epiſtles of St. *Paul* upon pretence he was an enemy to the law of *Moſes?* indeed it was boldly and moſt unreaſonably done; but if one title or one chapter of St. *Mark* be called apocryphal, for being ſuſpected of *Manicheiſme*, it is a plea that will too much juſtify others in their taking and chuſing what they liſt. But I will not urge it ſo far; but is not there as much reaſon for the fierce *Lutherans* to reject the epiſtle of St. *James* for favouring juſtification by works, or the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, upon pretence that the ſixth and tenth chapters do favour *Novatianiſme*; eſpecially ſince it was by ſome famous churches at firſt not accepted, even by the church of *Rome* herſelf? The parable of the woman taken in adultery, which is now in *John* 8. *Euſebius* ſays was not in any goſpel, but tne goſpel *ſecundum Hebræos*, and St. *Hierom* makes it doubtful, and ſo does St. *Chryſoſtom* and *Euthimius*, the firſt not vouchſafing to explicate it in his homilies upon St. *John*, the other affirming it not to be found in the exacter copies. I ſhall not need to urge that there are ſome words ſo near in ſound, that the ſcribes might eaſily miſtake: There is one famous one of Κυριω δʼελευονλες, which yet ſome copies read καιρω δʼελευονλες, the ſenſe is very unlike though the words be near, and there needs ſome little luxation to ſtrain this latter reading to a good ſenſe: That famous precept of St. *Paul*, that

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the women muſt pray with a covering on their head διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους, becauſe of the angels, hath brought into the church an opinion that angels are preſent in churches, and are ſpectators of our devotion and deportment. Such an opinion if it ſhould meet with peeviſh oppoſites on one ſide, and confident hyperaſpiſts on the other, might poſſibly make a ſect, and here were a clear ground for the affirmative, and yet who knows but that it might have been a miſtake of the tranſcribers to double the γ? for if it were read διὰ τοὺς ἀγελους, that the ſenſe be, women in publick aſſemblies muſt wear a veil, by reaſon of the companies of the young men there preſent, it would be no ill exchange for the loſs of a letter, to make ſo probable ſo clear a ſenſe of the place. But the inſtances in this kind, are too many, as appears in the variety of readings in ſeveral copies proceeding from the negligence or ignorance of the tranſcribers, or the malicious * endeavour of hereticks, or the inſerting marginal notes into the text, or the nearneſs of ſeveral words. Indeed there is ſo much evidence of this particular, that it hath encouraged the ſervants of the vulgar tranſlation (for ſo ſome are now adays) to prefer that tranſlation before the original; for although they have attempted that propoſition with very ill ſucceſs yet that they could think it poſſible to be proved, is an argument there is much variety and alterations in divers texts; for if there were not, it were impudence to pretend a tranſlation, and that none of the beſt, ſhould be better than the original. But ſo it is that this variety of read-

* Græci corruperunt novum teſtamentum ut teſtantur Tertul. l. 5. adv. Marcion. Euſeb. l. 5. Hiſt. c. ult. Irenæ. l. 1. c. 29. adver. hæreſ. Baſil. l. 2. contr. Eunomium.

ing is not of ſlight conſideration; for although it be demonſtrably true, that all things neceſſary to faith and good manners are preſerved from alteration and corruption, becauſe they are of things neceſſary, and they could not be neceſſary, unleſs they were delivered to us, God in his goodneſs and his juſtice having obliged himſelf to preſerve that which he hath bound us to obſerve and keep; yet in other things which God hath not obliged himſelf ſo punctually to preſerve; in theſe things ſince variety of reading is crept in, every reading takes away a degree of certainty from any propoſition derivative from thoſe places ſo read: And if ſome copies (eſpecially if they be publick and notable) omit a verſe or title, every argument from ſuch a title or verſe loſes much of its ſtrength and reputation; and we find it in a great inſtance. For when in probation of the myſtery of the glorious unity in trinity, we alledge that ſaying of St. *John* [*there are three which bear witneſs in heaven, the father, the word, and the ſpirit, and theſe three are one:*] the *Antitrinitarians* think they have anſwered the argument by ſaying the *Syrian* tranſlation, and divers Greek copies have not that verſe in them, and therefore being of doubtful authority, it cannot conclude with certainty in a queſtion of faith. And there is an inſtance on the catholick part. For when the *Arrians* urge the ſaying of our ſaviour, [*No man knows that day and hour*, (viz. of judgment) *no not the ſon, but the father only*,] to prove that the ſon knows not all things, and therefore cannot be God in the proper ſenſe; St. *Ambroſe* thinks he hath anſwered the argument by ſaying, thoſe words [*no not the ſon*] were thruſt into the text by the fraud of the *Arrians*. So that here we have one objection, which muſt firſt be cleared and made infallible, before we can be aſcertained in any ſuch queſtion as to call them hereticks that diſſent.

V.

V. 2. I conſider that there are very many ſenſes and deſigns of expounding ſcripture, and when the grammatical ſenſe is found out, we are many times never the nearer; it is not that which was intended; for there is in very many ſcriptures a double ſenſe, a literal and a ſpiritual (for the ſcripture is *a book written within and without (Apoc. 5.)* And both theſe ſenſes are ſubdivided. For the literal ſenſe is either natural or figurative: And the ſpiritual is ſometimes allegorical, ſometimes analogical, nay, ſometimes there are divers literal ſenſes in the ſame ſentence, as St. *Auſtin* excellently proves in divers * places, and it appears in divers quotations in the new teſtament, where the apoſtles and divine writers bring the ſame teſtimony to divers purpoſes; and particularly, St. *Paul*'s making that ſaying of the Pſalm, *Thou art my ſon, this day have I begotten thee*, to be an argument of Chriſt's reſurrection, and a deſignation or ordination to his pontificate is an inſtance very famous in his firſt and fifth chapter to the *Hebrews*. But now there being ſuch variety of ſenſes in ſcripture, and but few places ſo marked out, as not to be capable of divers ſenſes, if men will write commentaries, as *Herod* made orations μετα πολλης φανλασιας, what infallible κριτηριον will be left whereby to judge of the certain dogmatical reſolute ſenſe of ſuch places which have been the matter of queſtion? For put caſe a queſtion were commenced concerning the degrees of glory in heaven, as there is in the ſchools a noted one, to ſhew an inequality of reward, Chriſt's parable is brought of the reward of ten cities, and of five according to the divers improvement of the talents; this ſenſe is

* Lib. 12. confeſſ. cap. 26. Lib. 11. de Civit. Dei. c. 19. Lib. 3. de doctrina Chriſt. cap. 27.

myſtical, and yet very probable, and underſtood by men for ought I know, to this very ſenſe. And the reſult of the argument is made good by St. *Paul*, *as one ſtar differeth from another in glory*; ſo ſhall it be in the reſurrection of the dead. Now ſuppoſe another ſhould take the ſame liberty of expounding another parable to a myſtical ſenſe and interpretation, as all parables muſt be expounded; then the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, and though differing in labour, yet having an equal reward, to any man's underſtanding may ſeem very ſtrongly to prove the contrary, and as if it were of purpoſe, and that it were *primum intentum* of the parable, the lord of the vineyard determined the point reſolutely upon the mutiny and repining of them that had born the burden and heat of the day, *I will give unto this laſt even as to thee*; which to my ſenſe ſeems to determine the queſtion of degrees; they that work but little, and they that work long, ſhall not be diſtinguiſhed in the reward, though accidentally they were in the work: and if this opinion could but anſwer St. *Paul*'s words, it ſtands as fair, and perhaps fairer than the other. Now if we look well upon the words of St. *Paul*, we ſhall find he ſpeaks nothing at all of diverſity of degrees of glory in beatified bodies, but the differences of glory in bodies heavenly and earthly. *There are* (ſays he) *bodies earthly, and there are heavenly bodies: and one is the glory of the earthly, another the glory of the heavenly*; *one glory of the ſun, another of the moon, &c. So ſhall it be in the reſurrection*; *for it is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption.* Plainly thus, our bodies in the reſurrection ſhall differ as much from our bodies here in the ſtate of corruption, as one ſtar does from another. And now ſuppoſe a ſect ſhould be commenced upon this queſtion (upon lighter and vainer

vainer many have been) either ſide muſt reſolve to anſwer the others arguments, whether they can or no, and to deny to each other a liberty of expounding the parable to ſuch a ſenſe; and yet themſelves muſt uſe it, or want an argument. But men uſe to be unjuſt in their own caſes; and were it not better to leave each other to their liberty and ſeek to preſerve their own charity? for when the words are capable of a myſtical or a divers ſenſe, I know not why men's fancies or underſtandings ſhould be more bound to be like one another than their faces: And either in all ſuch places of ſcripture, a liberty muſt be indulged to every honeſt and peaceable wiſe man, or elſe all argument from ſuch places muſt be wholly declined. Now although I inſtanced in a queſtion, which by good fortune never came to open defiance, yet there have been ſects framed, upon lighter grounds, more inconſiderable queſtions, which have been diſputed on either ſide with arguments leſs material and leſs pertinent St. *Auſtin* laught at the *Donatiſts*, for bringing that ſaying of the ſpouſe in the *Canticles* to prove their ſchiſm, *Indica mihi ubi paſcas, ubi cubes in meridie.* For from thence they concluded the reſidence of the church was only in the ſouth part of the world, only in *Africa.* It was but a weak way of argument; yet the fathers were free enough to uſe ſuch mediums, to prove myſteries of great concernment;* but yet again, when they ſpeak either againſt an adverſary, or with conſideration, they deny that ſuch myſtical ſenſes can ſufficiently confirm a queſtion of faith. But I ſhall inſtance in the great queſtion of rebaptization of hereticks, which many ſaints, and martyrs, and confeſſors, and divers councils, and almoſt all *Aſia* and *Africa* did once believe and

* Hieron. in Matth. 13.

practice. Their grounds for the invalidity of the baptiſm by a heretick, were ſuch myſtical words as theſe, *Oleum peccatoris non impinguet caput meum*, *Pſ.* 140. And *Qui baptizatur a mortuo, quid proficit lavatio ejus? Eccluſ.* 34. And *Ab aqua aliena abſtinete*, *Prov.* 5. And *Deus peccatores non exaudit*, *John* 9. And *he that is not with me is againſt me*, *Luke* 11. I am not ſure the other part had Arguments ſo good. For the great one of *una fides unum baptiſma*, did not conclude it to their underſtandings who were of the other opinion, and men famous in their generations; for it was no argument that they who had been baptiſed by *John*'s baptiſm ſhould not be baptiſed in the name of Jeſus, becauſe *unus Deus*, *unum baptiſma*; and as it is ſtill one faith which a man confeſſeth ſeveral times, and one ſacrament of the euchariſt, though a man often communicates; ſo it might be one baptiſm tho' often miniſtered. And the unity of baptiſm might not be derived from the unity of the miniſtration, but from the unity of the religion into which they are baptiſed; though baptized a thouſand times, yet becauſe it was ſtill in the name of the holy trinity, ſtill into the death of Chriſt, it might be *unum baptiſma*. Whether St. *Cyprian*, *Firmilian*, and their colleagues had this diſcourſe or no (I know not) I am ſure they might have had much better to have evacuated the force of that argument, although I believe they had the wrong cauſe in hand. But this is it, that I ſay, that when a queſtion is ſo undetermined in ſcripture, that the arguments rely only upon ſuch myſtical places, whence the beſt fancies can draw the greateſt variety, and ſuch which perhaps were never intended by the Holy Ghoſt, it were good the rivers did not ſwell higher than the fountain, and the confidence higher than the argument and evidence; for in this caſe there could not be any thing ſo certainly proved, as that the diſagreeing party

party ſhould deſerve to be condemned by a ſentence of excommunication for diſbelieving it, and yet they were; which I wonder at ſo much the more, becauſe they (who as it was ſince judged) had the right cauſe, had not any ſufficient argument from ſcripture, not ſo much as ſuch myſtical arguments, but did fly to the tradition of the church, in which alſo I ſhall afterward ſhew, they had nothing that was abſolutely certain.

VI. 3. I conſider that there are divers places in ſcripture containing in them myſteries and queſtions of great concernment, and yet the fabrick and conſtitution is ſuch, that there is no certain mark to determine whether the ſenſe of them ſhould be literal or figurative; I ſpeak not here concerning extrinſecal means of determination, as traditive interpretation, councils, fathers, popes, and the like; I ſhall conſider them afterward in their ſeveral places; but here the ſubject matter being concerning ſcripture in its own capacity, I ſay there is nothing in the nature of the thing to determine the ſenſe and meaning, but it muſt be gotten out as it can; and that therefore it is unreaſonable, that what of itſelf is ambiguous ſhould be underſtood in its own prime ſenſe and intention, under the pain of either a ſin or an anathema; I inſtance in that famous place from whence hath ſprung that queſtion of tranſubſtantiation, *Hoc eſt corpus meum.* The words are plain and clear, apt to be underſtood in the literal ſenſe and yet this ſenſe is ſo hard as it does violence to reaſon, and therefore it is the queſtion whether or no it be not a figurative ſpeech. But here what ſhall we have to determine it? What means ſoever we take, and to what ſenſe ſoever you will expound it, you ſhall be put to give an account why you expound other places of ſcripture in the ſame caſe to quite contrary ſenſes. For if you expound it literally, then beſides that it

ſeems to intrench upon the words of our bleſſed ſaviour, *The words that I ſpeak they are ſpirit, and they are life*, that is, to be ſpiritually underſtood, (and it is a miſerable thing to ſee what wretched ſhifts are uſed to reconcile the literal ſenſe to theſe words, and yet to diſtinguiſh it from the Capernaitical fancy) but beſides this, why are not other thoſe ſayings of Chriſt expounded literally, *I am a vine*, *I am the door*, *I am a rock?* why do we fly to a figure in thoſe parrallel words? *This is the covenant which I make between me and you*; and yet that covenant was but the ſign of the covenant; and why do we fly to a figure in a precept, as well as in myſtery and a propoſition? *If thy right hand offend thee cut it off*; and yet we have figures enough to ſave a limb. If it be ſaid becauſe reaſon tells us theſe are not to be expounded according to the letter; this will be no plea for them who retain the literal expoſition of the other inſtance againſt all reaſon, againſt all philoſophy, againſt all ſenſe, and againſt two or three ſciences. But if you expound theſe words figuratively, beſides that you are to conteſt againſt a world of prejudices, you give yourſelf the liberty, which if others will uſe when either they have a reaſon or a neceſſity ſo to do, they may perhaps turn all into allegory, and ſo may evacuate any precept, and elude any argument. Well, ſo it is that very wiſe men have expounded things allegorically*, when they ſhould have expounded them literally. So did the famous *Origen*, who as St. *Hierom* reports of him, turned paradiſe ſo into an allegory, that he took away quite the truth of the ſtory, and not only *Adam* was turned out of

* Sic. S. Hieron. In adoleſcentia provocatus ardore & ſtudio Scripturarum allegorice interpretatus ſum Abdiam Prophetam, cujus hiſtoriam neſciebam. *De ſenſu Allegorico St. Script. dixit Baſilius*, ως κεκομψευμενον μεν τον λογον αποδεχομεθα αληθη δε ειναι ου παυ δωσομεν.

the

the garden, but the garden itſelf out of paradiſe. Others expound things literally when they ſhould underſtand them in allegory; ſo did the antient *Papias* underſtand (*Apocal.* 20.) Chriſt's millenary reign upon earth, and ſo, depreſſed the hopes of chriſtianity and their deſires to the longing and expectation of temporal pleaſures and ſatisfactions, and he was followed by *Juſtin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius* *, and indeed the whole church generally till St. *Auſtin*'s and St. *Hierom*'s time who firſt of any whoſe works are extant, did reprove the error. If ſuch great ſpirits be deceived in finding out what kind of ſenſes are to be given to ſcriptures, it may well be endured that we who ſit at their feet, may alſo tread in the ſteps of them whoſe feet could not always tread aright.

VII. 4. I conſider that there are ſome places of ſcripture that have the ſelf ſame expreſſions, the ſame preceptive words, the ſame reaſon and account in all appearance, and yet either muſt be expounded to quite different ſenſes, or elſe we muſt renounce the communion, and the charities of a great part of Chriſtendom. And yet there is abſolutely nothing in the thing or in its circumſtances, or in its adjuncts that can determine it to different purpoſes. I inſtance in thoſe great excluſive negatives for the neceſſity of both ſacraments. *Niſi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua, &c. Niſi manducaveritis carnem filii hominis, &c.* a *non introibit in regnum cœlorum* for both theſe. Now then the firſt is urged for the abſolute indiſpenſable neceſſity of baptiſm even in infants, inſomuch that infants go to part of hell, if (inculpably both on their own and their parents part) they miſs of baptiſm, for that is the doctrine of the

* L. 20. de Civitit. Dei, c. 7. præfat. L. 19. in Iſa. & in cap. 36. Ezek.

church

church of *Rome*, which they learnt from St. *Auſtin*, and others alſo do from hence baptize infants, though with a leſs opinion of its abſolute neceſſity. And yet the ſame manner of precept in the ſame form of words, in the ſame manner of threatning, by an excluſive negative, ſhall not enjoin us to communicate infants, though damnation (at leaſt in form of words) be exactly and *per omnia* alike appendant to the neglect of holy baptiſm and the venerable Euchariſt. If [*niſi quis renatus*] ſhall conclude againſt the anabaptiſt, for neceſſity of baptizing infants (as ſure enough we ſay, it does) why ſhall not an equal [*niſi comederitis*] bring infants to the holy communion? The primitive church for ſome two whole ages did follow their own principles, wherever they led them; and ſeeing that upon the ſame ground equal reſults muſt follow, they did communicate infants as ſoon as they had baptized them. And why the church of *Rome* ſhould not do ſo too, being ſhe expounds [*niſi comederitis*] of oral manducation, I cannot yet learn a reaſon. And for others that expound it of a ſpiritual manducation, why they ſhall not allow the diſagreeing part the ſame liberty of expounding [*niſi quis renatus*] too, I by no means can underſtand. And in theſe caſes no external determiner can be pretended in anſwer. For whatſoever is extrinſecal to the words, as councils, tradition, church authority, and fathers, either have ſaid nothing at all, or have concluded by their practice contrary to the preſent opinion, as is plain in their communicating infants by virtue of [*niſi comederitis.*]

VIII. 5. I ſhall not need to urge the myſteriouſneſs of ſome points in ſcripture, which *ex natura rei* are hard to be underſtood though very plainly repreſented. For there are ſome *ſecreta theologiæ*, which are only to be underſtood by perſons

ſons very holy and ſpiritual, which are rather to be felt than diſcourſed of, and therefore, if peradventure they be offered to publick conſideration, they will therefore be oppoſed becauſe they run the ſame fortune with many other queſtions, that is, not to be underſtood, and ſo much the rather becauſe their underſtanding, that is, the feeling ſuch ſecrets of the kingdom, are not the reſults of logick and philoſophy, nor yet of publick revelation, but of the publick ſpirit privately working, and in no man is a duty, but in all that have it, is a reward; and is not neceſſary for all, but given to ſome; producing its operations, not regularly, but upon occaſions, perſonal neceſſities and new emergencies. Of this nature are the ſpirit of obſignation, belief of particular ſalvation, ſpecial influences and comforts coming from a ſenſe of the ſpirit of adoption, actual fervours and great complacencies in devotion, ſpiritual joys, which are little drawings aſide of the curtains of peace and eternity, and antepaſts of immortality. But the not underſtanding the perfect conſtitution and temper of theſe myſteries (and it is hard for any man ſo to underſtand, as to make others do ſo too that feel them not) is cauſe that in many queſtions of ſecret theology, by being very apt and eaſy to be miſtaken, there is a neceſſity in forbearing one another; and this conſideration would have been of good uſe in the queſtion between *Soto* and *Catharinus*, both for the preſervation of their charity and explication of the myſtery.

IX. 6. But here it will not be unſeaſonable to conſider, that all ſyſtems and principles of ſcience are expreſſed ſo that either by reaſon of the univerſality of the terms and ſubject matter of the infinite variety of human underſtandings, and theſe peradventure ſwayed by intereſt, or determined

mined by things accidental and extrinſecal, they ſeem to divers men, nay to the ſame men upon divers occaſions, to ſpeak things extremely diſparate and ſometimes contrary, but very often of great variety. And this very thing happens alſo in ſcripture, that if it were not in *re ſacra & ſeria*, it were excellent ſport to obſerve how the ſame place of ſcripture ſerves ſeveral turns upon occaſion, and they at that time believe the words ſound nothing elſe, whereas in the liberty of their judgments and abſtracting from that occaſion, their commentaries underſtand them wholly to a differing ſenſe. It is a wonder of what excellent uſe to the church of *Romæ*, is [*tibi dabo claves:*] It was ſpoken to *Peter* and none elſe (ſometimes) and therefore it concerns him and his ſucceſſors only; the reſt are to derive from him. And yet if you queſtion them for their ſacrament of penance, and prieſtly abſolution, then *tibi dabo claves* comes in, and that was ſpoken to St. *Peter*, and in him to the whole college of the apoſtles, and in them to the whole hierarchy. If you queſtion why the pope pretends to free ſouls from purgatory, *tibi dabo claves* is his warrant; but if you tell him the keys are only for binding and looſing on earth directly, and in heaven conſequently; and that purgatory is a part of hell, or rather neither earth nor heaven nor hell, and ſo the keys ſeem to have nothing to do with it, then his commiſſion is to be enlarged by a ſuppletory of reaſon and conſequences, and his keys ſhall unlock this difficulty; for it is *clavis ſcientiæ* as well as *authoritatis*. And theſe keys ſhall enable him to expound ſcriptures infallibly, to determine queſtions, to preſide in councils, to dictate to all the world magiſterially, to rule the church, to diſpenſe with oaths, to abrogate laws: And if his key of knowledge will not, the key of authority ſhall,

ſhall, and *tibi dabo claves* ſhall anſwer for all. We have an inſtance in the ſingle fancy of one man, what rare variety of matter is afforded from thoſe plain words of [*Oravi pro te Petre*] *Luke* 22. for that place ſays *Bellarmine*, is otherwiſe to be underſtood of *Peter*, otherwiſe of the popes, and otherwiſe of the church of *Rome*. And [*pro te*] ſignifies that Chriſt prayed that *Peter* might neither err perſonally nor judicially, and that *Peter*'s ſucceſſors if they did err perſonally might not err judicially, and that the Roman church might not err perſonally. All this variety of ſenſe is pretended by the fancy of one man, to be in a few words which are as plain and and ſimple as are any words in ſcripture. And what then in thoſe thouſands that are intricate? So is done with *paſce oves*, which a man would think were a commiſſion as innocent and guiltleſs of deſigns, as the ſheep in the folds are. But if it be aſked why the biſhop of *Rome* calls himſelf univerſal biſhop, *paſce oves* is his warrant? Why he pretends to a power of depoſing princes, *paſce oves*, ſaid Chriſt to *Peter* the ſecond time. If it be demanded why alſo he pretends to a power of authorizing his ſubjects to kill him, *paſce agnos* ſaid Chriſt the third time: and *paſe* is *doce*, and *paſce* is *impera*, and *paſce* is *occide*. Now if others ſhould take the ſame (unreaſonableneſs I will not ſay, but the ſame) liberty in expounding ſcripture, or if it be not licence taken, but that the ſcripture itſelf is ſo full and redundant in ſenſes quite contrary, what man ſoever, or what company of men ſoever ſhall uſe this principle will certainly find ſuch rare productions from ſeveral places, that either the unreaſonableneſs of the thing will diſcover the error of the proceeding, or elſe there

* Bellar. lib. 4. de Pontif. c. 3, §. reſpondeo primo.

will

will be a neceſſity of permitting a great liberty of judgment, where is ſo infinite variety without limit or mark of neceſſary determination. If the firſt, then becauſe an error is ſo obvious and ready to ourſelves, it will be great imprudence or tyranny to be haſty in judging others; but if the latter, it is it that I contend for; for it is moſt unreaſonable, when either the thing itſelf miniſters variety, or that we take licence to ourſelves in variety of interpretations, or proclaim to all the world our great weakneſs, by our actually being deceived, that we ſhould either preſcribe to others magiſterially when we are in an error, or limit their underſtandings when the thing itſelf affords liberty and variety.

SECT. IV.

Of the Difficulty of Expounding Scripture.

I. THESE conſiderations are taken from the nature of ſcripture itſelf; but then if we conſider that we have no certain ways of determining places of difficulty and queſtion, infallibly and certainly, but that we muſt hope to be ſaved in the belief of things plain, neceſſary and fundamental, and our pious endeavour to find out God's meaning in ſuch places, which he hath left under a cloud, for other great ends, reſerved to his own knowledge; we ſhall ſee a very great neceſſity in allowing a liberty in propheſying, without preſcribing authoritatively to other mens conſciences, and becoming lords and maſters of their faith. Now the means of expounding ſcripture are either external, or internal. For the external, as church authority, tradition, fathers, councils,

councils and decrees of biſhops, they are of a diſtinct conſideration, and follow after in their order. But here we will firſt conſider the invalidity and uncertainty of all thoſe means of expounding ſcripture which are more proper and internal to the nature of the thing. The great maſters of commentaries, ſome whereof have undertaken to know all myſteries, have propounded many ways to expound ſcripture, which indeed are excellent helps, but not infallible aſſiſtances, both becauſe themſelves are but moral inſtruments which force not truth *ex abſcondito*, as alſo becauſe they are not infallibly uſed and applied. 1. Sometimes the ſenſe is drawn forth by the context and connexion of parts: It is well when it can be ſo. But when there are two or three antecedents, and ſubjects ſpoken of, what man or what rule ſhall aſcertain me that I may make my reference true by drawing the relation to ſuch an antecedent; to which I have a mind to apply it; another hath not. For in a contexture where one part does not always depend upon another; where things of differing natures intervene and interrupt the firſt intentions, there it is not always very probable to expound ſcripture, and take its meaning by its proportion to the neighbouring words. But who deſires ſatisfaction in this, may read the obſervation verified in St. *Gregory*'s moral upon *Job*, lib. 5. c. 29. and the inſtances he there brings are excellent proof, that this way of interpretation does not warrant any man to impoſe his expoſitions upon the belief and underſtanding of other men too confidently and magiſterially.

II. 2. Another great pretence of medium is the conference of places, which *Illyricus* calls *ingens remedium & fæliciſſimam expoſitionem ſanctæ ſcripturæ*; and indeed ſo it is if well and temperately uſed; but

but then we are beholden to them that do ſo; for there is no rule that can conſtrain them to it; for comparing of places is of ſo indefinite capacity, that if there be ambiguity of words, variety of ſenſe, alteration of circumſtances, or difference of ſtyle amongſt divine writers, then there is nothing that may be more abuſed by willful people, or may more eaſily deceive the unwary, or that may amuſe the moſt intelligent obſerver. The anabaptiſts take advantage enough in this proceeding, (and indeed ſo may any one that liſt) and when we pretend againſt them the neceſſity of baptizing all, by authority of *niſi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua & ſpiritu*, they have a parallel for it, and tell us that Chriſt will *baptize us with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire*, and that one place expounds the other; and becauſe by fire is not meant an element or any thing that is natural, but an allegory and figurative expreſſion of the ſame thing; ſo alſo by water may be meant the figure ſignifying the effect or manner of operation of the holy ſpirit, fire in one place, and water in the other, do but repreſent to us that Chriſt's baptiſm is nothing elſe but the cleanſing and purifying us by the Holy Ghoſt; but that which I here note as of greateſt concernment, and which in all reaſon ought to be an utter overthrow to this topick, is an univerſal abuſe of it among thoſe that uſe it moſt, and when two places ſeem to have the ſame expreſſion, or if a word have a double ſignification, becauſe in this place it may have ſuch a ſenſe, therefore it muſt, becauſe in one of the places the ſenſe is to their purpoſe, they conclude that therefore it muſt be ſo in the other too. An inſtance I give in the great queſtion between the *Socinians* and the catholicks. If any place be urged in which our bleſſed Saviour is called God, they ſhew you two

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or three where the word God is taken in a depreſſed ſenſe, for a *quaſi Deus*, as when God ſaid to *Moſes*, *Conſtitui te Deum Pharaonis*; and hence they argue, becauſe I can ſhew the word is uſed for a *Deus factus*, therefore no argument is ſufficient to prove Chriſt to be *Deus verus*, from the appellative of *Deus*. And might not another argue to the exact contrary, and as well urge that *Moſes* is *Deus verus*, becauſe in ſome places the word *Deus* is uſed *pro Deo æterno*: Both ways the argument concludes impiouſly and unreaſonably. It is a fallacy *a poſſe ad eſſe affirmativè*; becauſe breaking of bread is ſometimes uſed for an Euchariſtical manducation in ſcripture; therefore I ſhall not from any teſtimony of ſcripture, affirming the firſt Chriſtians to have broken bread together, conclude that they lived hoſpitably and in common ſociety. Becauſe it may poſſibly be eluded, therefore it does not ſignify any thing. And this is the great way of anſwering all the arguments that can be brought againſt any thing that any man hath a mind to defend; and any man that reads any controverſies of any ſide, ſhall find as many inſtances of this vanity almoſt as he finds arguments from ſcripture; this fault was of old noted by St. *Auſtin*, for then they had got the trick, and he is angry at it, *neque enim putare debemus eſſe præſcriptum, ut quod in aliquo loco res aliqua per ſimilitudinem ſignificaverit, hoc etiam ſemper ſignificare credamus.*

III. 3. Oftentimes ſcriptures are pretended to be expounded by a proportion and analogy of reaſon. And this is as the other, if it be well, its well. But unleſs there were ſome *intellectus univerſalis* furniſhed with infallible propoſitions, by referring to which every man might argue infallibly, this logick may deceive as well as any of the reſt. For it is with reaſon as with mens

* De Doctri. Chriſtian. lib. 3.

taſtes; although there are are ſome general principles which are reaſonable to all men, yet every man is not able to draw out all its conſequences, nor to underſtand them when they are drawn forth, nor to believe when he does underſtand them. There is a precept of St. *Paul* directed to the *Theſſalonians* before they were gathered into a body of a church, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 6. *To withdraw from every brother that walketh diſorderly.* But if this precept were now obſerved, I would fain know whether we ſhould not fall into that inconvenience which St. *Paul* ſought to avoid in giving the ſame commandment to the church of *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 9. *I wrote to you that ye ſhould not company with fornicators; and yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, for then ye muſt go out of the world:* And therefore he reſtrains it to a quitting the ſociety of Chriſtians living ill lives. But now that all the world hath been Chriſtians, if we ſhould ſin in keeping company with vicious Chriſtians, muſt we not alſo go out of this world? Is not the precept made null, becauſe the reaſon is altered, and things are come about, and that the οἱ πολλοι are the brethren ἀδελφοι ὀνομαζομενοι called brethren, as St. *Paul*'s phraſe is? And yet either this never was conſidered, or not yet believed; for it is generally taken to be obligatory, though (I think) ſeldom practiſed. But when we come to expound ſcriptures to a certain ſenſe by arguments drawn from prudential motives, then we are in a vaſt plain without any ſufficient guide, and we ſhall have ſo many ſenſes, as there are human prudences. But that which goes further than this, is a parity of reaſon from a plain place of ſcripture to an obſcure, from that which is plainly ſet down in a text to another that is more remote from it. And thus is that place in St. *Matthew* forced, *If thy brother refuſe to be amended, Dic eccleſiæ.* Here ſome of the Roman doctors

doctors argue, If Christ commands to tell the church in case of adultery or private injury, then much more in case of heresy. Well, suppose this to be a good interpretation; why must I stay here? Why may not I also add by parity of reason, If the church must be told of heresy much more of treason: And why may not I reduce all sinners to the cognizance of a church tribunal, as some men do indirectly, and *Senecanus* does heartily and plainly? If a man's principles be good, and his deductions certain, he need not care whither they carry him. But when an authority is intrusted to a person, and the extent of his power expressed in his commission, it will not be safety to meddle beyond his commission upon confidence of a parity of reason. To instance once more; when Christ in *pasce oves & tu es Petrus*, gave power to the pope to govern the church (for to that sense the church of *Rome* expounds those authorities) by a certain consequence of reason, say they, he gave all things necessary for exercise of this jurisdiction, and therefore in *pasce oves* he gave him an indirect power over temporals, for that is necessary that he may do his duty: Well, having gone thus far, we will go further upon the parity of reason, therefore he hath given the pope the gift of tongues, and he hath given him power to give it; for how else shall *Xavier* convert the *Indians?* He hath given him also power to command the seas and the winds, that they should obey him, for this also is very necessary in some cases. And so *paste oves* is *accipe donum linguarum*, and *impera ventis*, *& dispone regum diademata*, *& laicorum prædia*, and *influentias cæli* too, and whatsoever the parity of reason will judge equally necessary in order to *pasce oves*; when a man does speak reason, it is but reason he should be heard; but though he

may have the good fortune, or the great abilities to do it, yet he hath not a certainty, no regular infallible aſſiſtance, no inſpiration of arguments and deductions; and if he had, yet becauſe it muſt be reaſon that muſt judge of reaſon, unleſs other mens underſtandings were of the ſame air, the ſame conſtitution and ability, they cannot be preſcribed unto by another man's reaſon; eſpecially becauſe ſuch reaſonings as uſually are in explication of particular places of ſcripture, depend upon minute circumſtances and particularities, in which it is ſo eaſy to be deceived, and ſo hard to ſpeak reaſon regularly and always, that it is the greater wonder if we be not deceived.

IV. 4. Others pretend to expound ſcripture by the analogy of faith, and that is the moſt ſure and infallible way (as it is thought:) But upon ſtricter ſurvey it is but a chimera, a thing in *nubibus* which varies like the right hand and left hand of a pillar, and at the beſt is but like the coaſt of a country to a traveller out of his way; it may bring him to his journey's end though twenty miles about; it may keep him from running into the ſea, and from miſtaking a river for dry land; but whether this little path or the other be the right way it tells not. So is the analogy of faith, that is, if I underſtand it right, the rule of faith, that is the creed. Now were it not a fine device to go to expound all the ſcripture by the creed, there being in it ſo many thouſand places which have no more relation to any article in the creed, than they have to *Tytyre tu patulæ?* Indeed if a man reſolves to keep the analogy of faith, that is to expound ſcripture, ſo as not to do any violence to any fundamental article, he ſhall be ſure however he errs, yet not to deſtroy faith, he ſhall not periſh in his expoſi-

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tion. And that was the preeept given by St. *Paul*, that all propheſyings ſhould be eſtimated κατ' ἀναλογιαν πιστεως, *Rom.* 6. 12. and to this very purpoſe, St. *Auſtin* in his expoſition of *Geneſis*, by way of preface ſets down the articles of faith, with this deſign and proteſtation of it, that if he ſays nothing againſt thoſe articles, though he miſs the particular ſenſe of the place, there is no danger, or ſin in his expoſition; but how that analogy of faith ſhould have any other influence in expounding ſuch places in which thoſe articles of faith are neither expreſſed nor involved, I underſtand not. But then if you extend the analogy of faith further than that which is proper to the rule or ſymbol of faith, then every man expounds ſcripture according to the analogy of faith; but what? His own faith: which faith if it be queſtioned, I am no more bound to expound according to the analogy of another man's faith, than he to expound according to the analogy of mine. And this is it that is complained of on all ſides that overvalue their own opinions. Scripture ſeems ſo clearly to ſpeak what they believe, that they wonder all the world does not ſee it as clear as they do; but they ſatisfy themſelves with ſaying that it is becauſe they come with prejudice, whereas if they had the true belief, that is, theirs, they would eaſily ſee what they ſee. And this is very true: For if they did believe as others believe, they would expound ſcripture to their ſenſe, but if this be expounding according to the analogy of faith, it ſignifies no more than this, Be you of my mind, and then my arguments will ſeem concluding, and my authorities and allegations preſſing and pertinent: And this will ſerve on all ſides, and therefore will do but little ſervice to the determination of queſtions, or preſcribing to other mens conſciences on any ſide.

V. Laſtly, Conſulting the originals is thought a great matter to interpretation of ſcriptures. But this is to ſmall purpoſe: For indeed it will expound the Hebrew and the Greek, and rectify tranſlations. But I know no man that ſays that the ſcriptures in Hebrew and Greek are eaſy and certain to be underſtood, and that they are hard in Latin and Engliſh: The difficulty is in the thing however it be expreſſed, the leaſt is in the language. If the original languages were our mother tongue, ſcripture is not much the eaſier to us; and a natural Greek or a Jew, can with no more reaſon or authority obtrude his interpretations upon other mens conſciences, than a man of another nation. Add to this that the inſpection of the original, is no more certain way of interpretation of ſcripture now than it was to the fathers and primitive ages of the church; and yet he that obſerves what infinite variety of tranſlations of the bible were in the firſt ages of the church (as St. *Hierom* obſerves) and never a one like another; will think that we ſhall differ as much in our interpretations as they did, and that the medium is as uncertain to us as it was to them; and ſo it is; witneſs the great number of late tranſlations, and the infinite number of commentaries, which are too pregnant an argument that we neither agree in the underſtanding of the words nor of the ſenſe.

VI. The truth is, all theſe ways of interpreting of ſcripture which of themſelves are good helps, are made either by deſign, or by our infirmities, ways of intricating and involving ſcriptures in greater difficulty, becauſe men do not learn their doctrines from ſcripture, but come to the underſtanding of ſcripture with preconceptions and ideas of doctrines of their own, and then no wonder that ſcriptures look like pictures, wherein

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every man in the room believes they look on him only, and that whereſoever he ſtands, or how often ſoever he changes his ſtation. So that now what was intended for a remedy, becomes the promoter of our diſeaſe, and our meat becomes the matter of ſickneſſes: And the miſchief is, the wit of man cannot find a remedy for it; for there is no rule, no limit, no certain principle, by which all men may be guided to a certain and ſo infallible an interpretation, that he can with any equity preſcribe to others to believe his interpretations in places of controverſy and ambiguity. A man would think that the memorable propheſy of *Jacob*, that the ſcepter ſhould not depart from *Judah* till *Shiloh* come, ſhould have been ſo clear a determination of the time of a *Meſſias*, that a Jew ſhould never have doubted it to have been verified in *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*; and yet for this ſo clear vaticination, they have no leſs than twenty ſix anſwers. St. *Paul* and St. *James* ſeem to ſpeak a little diverſly concerning juſtification by faith and works, and yet to my underſtanding it is very eaſy to reconcile them: but all men are not of my mind; for *Oſiander* in his confutation of the book which *Melanchton* wrote againſt him, obſerves, that there are twenty ſeveral opinions concerning juſtification, all drawn from the ſcriptures, by the men only of the *Auguſtan* confeſſion. There are ſixteen ſeveral opinions concerning original ſin; and as many definitions of the ſacraments as there are ſects of men that diſagree about them.

VII. And now what help is there for us in the midſt of theſe uncertainties? If we follow any one tranſlation, or any one man's commentary, what rule ſhall we have to chuſe the right by? or is there any one man, that hath tranſlated perfectly, or expounded infallibly? No tranſlation challenges

ſuch a prerogative as to be authentick, but the vulgar latin; and yet ſee with what good ſucceſs: For when it was declared authentick by the council of *Trent*, *Sixtus* put forth a copy much mended of what it was, and tied all men to follow that; but that did not ſatisfy; for pope *Clement* reviews and corrects it in many places, and ſtill the decree remains in a changed ſubject. And ſecondly, that tranſlation will be very unapt to ſatisfy, in which one of their own men *Iſidore Clarius* a monk of *Breſcia*, found and mended eight thouſand faults, beſides innumerable others which he ſays he pretermitted. And then thirdly, to ſhew how little themſelves were ſatisfied with it, divers learned men amongſt them did new tranſlate the bible, and thought they did God and the church good ſervice in it. So that if you take this for your precedent, you are ſure to be miſtaken infinitely: If you take any other, the authors themſelves do not promiſe you any ſecurity. If you reſolve to follow any one as far only as you ſee cauſe, then you only do wrong or right by chance; for you have certainty juſt proportionable to your own ſkill, to your own infallibility. If you reſolve to follow any one whitherſoever he leads, we ſhall oftentimes come hither, where we ſhall ſee ourſelves become ridiculous, as it happened in the caſe of *Spiridion* biſhop of *Cyprus*, who ſo reſolved to follow his old book, that when an eloquent biſhop who was deſired to preach, read his text, *tu autem tolle cubile tuum et ambula*; *Spiridion* was very angry with him, becauſe in his book it was *tolle lectum tuum*, and thought it arrogance in the preacher to ſpeak better latin than his tranſlator had done: And if it be thus in tranſlations, it is far worſe in expoſitions: (*Quia ſcil: ſcripturam ſacram pro ipſa ſui altitudine non uno eodemque ſenſu omnes accipiunt, ut*

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pene quot homines tot illic ſententiæ erui poſſe videantur, ſaid *Vincent Lirinenſis**) in which every man knows what innumerable ways there are of being miſtaken, God having in things not ſimply neceſſary left ſuch a difficulty upon thoſe parts of ſcripture which are the ſubject matters of controverſy *ad edomandam labore ſuperbiam, & intellectum a faſtidio revocandum* (as St. *Auſtin* gives a reaſon) that all who err honeſtly, are therefore to be pitied, and tolerated, becauſe it is or may be the condition of every man at one time or other.

VIII. The ſum is this: Since holy ſcripture is the repoſitory of divine truth, and the great rule of faith, to which all ſects of chriſtians do appeal for probation of their ſeveral opinions, and ſince all agree in the articles of the creed as things clearly and plainly ſet down, and as containing all that which is of ſimple and prime neceſſity; and ſince on the other ſide there are in ſcripture many other myſteries, and matters of queſtion upon which there is a veil; ſince there are ſo many copies with infinite varieties of reading; ſince a various interpunction, a parentheſis, a letter, an accent may much alter the ſenſe; ſince ſome places have divers literal ſenſes, many have ſpiritual, myſtical and allegorical meanings; ſince there are ſo many tropes, metonymies, ironies, hyperboles, proprieties and improprieties of language, whoſe underſtanding depends upon ſuch circumſtances that it is almoſt impoſſible to know its proper interpretation; now that the knowledge of ſuch circumſtances and particular ſtories is irrevocably loſt: ſince there are ſome myſteries which at the beſt advantage of expreſſion, are not eaſy to be

* In Commonit.

† Lib. 2, de doctrin. Chriſtian. cap. 6.

apprehended,

apprehended, and whoſe explication, by reaſon of our imperfections, muſt needs be dark, ſometimes weak, ſometimes unintelligible: and laſtly, ſince thoſe ordinany means of expounding ſcripture, as ſearching the originals, conference of places, parity of reaſon, and analogy of faith, are all dubious, uncertain, and very fallible, he that is the wiſeſt and by conſequence the likelieſt to expound trueſt in all probability of reaſon, will be very far from confidence, becauſe every one of theſe and many more are like ſo many degrees of improbability and uncertainty, all depreſſing our certainty of finding out truth in ſuch myſteries and amidſt ſo many difficulties. And therefore a wiſe man that conſiders this, would not willingly be preſcribed to by others; and therefore if he alſo be a juſt man, he will not impoſe upon others; for it is beſt every man ſhould be left in that liberty from which no man can juſtly take him, unleſs he could ſecure him from error: So that here alſo there is a neceſſity to conſerve the liberty of propheſying, and interpreting ſcripture; a neceſſity derived from the conſideration of the difficulty of ſcripture in queſtions controverted, and the uncertainty of any internal medium of interpretation.

SECTION V.

Of the inſufficiency and uncertainty of Tradition, *to expound ſcripture, or determine queſtions.*

I. IN the next place, we muſt conſider thoſe extrinſecal means of interpreting ſcripture, and determining queſtions, which they moſt of all confide in, that reſtrain propheſying with the greateſt

greateſt tyranny. The firſt and principal is Tradition, which is pretended not only to expound ſcripture, (* *Neceſſe enim eſt propter tantos tam varii erroris anfractus, ut prophetica & apoſtolicæ interpretationis linea ſecundum eccleſiaſtici & catholici ſenſus normam dirigatur.*) but alſo to propound articles upon a diſtinct ſtock, ſuch articles whereof there is no mention and propoſition in ſcripture. And in this topick, not only the diſtinct articles are clear and plain, like as the fundamentals of faith expreſſed in ſcripture, but alſo it pretends to expound ſcripture, and to determine queſtions with ſo much clarity and certainty, as there ſhall neither be error nor doubt remaining, and therefore no diſagreeing is here to be endured. And indeed it is moſt true if tradition can perform theſe pretenſions, and teach us plainly, and aſſure us infallibly of all truths, which they require us to believe, we can in this caſe have no reaſon to diſbelieve them, and therefore are certainly hereticks if we do, becauſe without a crime, without ſome human intereſt or collateral deſign, we cannot diſbelieve traditive doctrine or traditive interpretation, if it be infallibly proved to us that Tradition is an infallible guide.

II. But here I firſt conſider that Tradition is no repoſitory of articles of faith, and therefore the not following it is no argument of hereſy; for beſides that I have ſhewed ſcripture in its plain expreſſes to be an abundant rule of faith and manners, tradition is a topick as fallible as any other; ſo fallible that it cannot be ſufficient evidence to any man in a matter of faith or queſtion of hereſy.

III. For 1ſt, I find that the fathers were infinitely deceived in their account and enumeration

* Vincent. Lirinenſ. in Commonitor.

of

of traditions, ſometimes they did call ſome traditions ſuch, not which they knew to be ſo, but by arguments and preſumptions they concluded them ſo. Such was that of * St. *Auſtin*, *ea quæ univerſalis tenet eccleſia nec a conciliis inſtituta reperiuntur, credibile eſt ab apoſtolorum traditione deſcendiſſe.* Now ſuppoſe this rule probable, that's the moſt, yet it is not certain; it might come by cuſtom, whoſe original was not known, but yet could not derive from an apoſtolical principle. Now when they conclude of particular traditions by a general rule, and that general rule not certain, but at the moſt probable in any thing, and certainly falſe in ſome things, it is no wonder if the productions, that is, their judgments, and pretence fail ſo often. And if I ſhould but inſtance in all the particulars, in which tradition was pretended falſely or uncertainly in the firſt ages, I ſhould multiply them to a troubleſome variety; for it was then accounted ſo glorious a thing to have ſpoken with the perſons of the apoſtles, that if any man could with any colour pretend to it, he might abuſe the whole church, and obtrude what he liſted under the ſpecious title of apoſtolical tradition, and it is very notorious to every man that will but read and obſerve the recognitions or ſtromata of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, where there is enough of ſuch falſe wares ſhewed in every book, and pretended to be no leſs than from the apoſtles. In the firſt age after the apoſtles, *Papias* pretended he received a tradition from the apoſtles, that Chriſt before the day of judgment ſhould reign a thouſand years upon earth, and his ſaints with him in temporal felicities; and this thing proceeding from ſo great an authority as the teſtimony of

* Epiſt. 118. ad Ianuar. De bapt. contr. Donat. lib. 4. c. 24.

Papias,

Papias, drew after it all or moſt of the chriſtians in the firſt three hundred years. For beſides, that the millenary opinion is expreſsly taught by *Papias*, *Juſtin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Origen*, *Lactantius*, *Severus*, *Victorinus*, *Apollinaris*, *Nepos*, and divers others famous in their time, *Juſtin Martyr* in his dialogue againſt *Tryphon* ſays, it was the belief of all chriſtians exactly orthodox, και ει τινες εισι καθα παντα ορθογνωμονες Χριστιανοι, and yet there was no ſuch tradition, but a miſtake in *Papias*; but I find it no where ſpoke againſt, till *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria* confuted *Nepos*'s book, and converted *Coracion* the *Egyptian* from the opinion. Now if a tradition whoſe beginning of being called ſo began with a ſcholar of the apoſtles (for ſo was *Papias*) and then continued for ſome ages upon the mere authority of ſo famous a man, did yet deceive the church: much more fallible is the pretence, when two or three hundred years after, it but commences, and then by ſome learned man is firſt called a tradition apoſtolical. And ſo it happened in the caſe of the *Arrian* hereſy, which the *Nicene* fathers did confute by objecting a contrary tradition apoſtolical, as * *Theodoret* reports; and yet if they had not had better arguments from ſcripture than from tradition, they would have failed much in ſo good a cauſe; for this very pretence the *Arrians* themſelves made, and deſired to be tried by the fathers of the firſt three hundred years, which was a confutation ſufficient to them who pretended a clear tradition†, becauſe it was unimaginable that the tradition ſhould leap ſo as not to come from the firſt to the laſt by the middle. But that this trial was ſometimes declined by that excellent man St. *Athanaſius*, although at other times confidently

* Lib. 1. Hiſt. c. 8. † Vide Petav. in Epiph. her. 69.

and

and truly pretended, it was an argument the tradition was not ſo † clear, but both ſides might with ſome fairneſs pretend to it. And therefore one of the prime founders of their hereſy, the heretick ‡ *Artemon* having obſerved the advantage might be taken by any ſect that would pretend tradition, becauſe the medium was plauſible and conſiſting of ſo many particulars, that it was hard to be redargued, pretended a tradition from the Apoſtles, that Chriſt was φιλος ἀνθρωπος, and that the tradition did deſcend by a conſtant ſucceſſion in the church of *Rome* to Pope *Victor*'s time incluſively, and till *Zepherinus* had interrupted the ſeries and corrupted the doctrine; which pretence if it had not had ſome appearance of truth, ſo as poſſibly to abuſe the church, had not been worthy of confutation, which yet was with care undertaken by an old writer, out of whom *Euſebius* tranſcribes a large paſſage to reprove the vanity of the pretender. But I obſerve from hence, that it was uſual to pretend tradition, and that it was eaſier pretended than confuted, and I doubt not but oftener done than diſcovered. A great queſtion aroſe in *Africa* concerning the baptiſm of hereticks, whether it were valid or no. St. *Cyprian* and his party appealed to ſcripture; *Stephen* biſhop of *Rome* and his party, would be judged by cuſtom and tradition eccleſiaſtical. See how much the nearer the queſtion was to a determination, either that probation was not accounted by St. *Cyprian*, and the biſhops both of *Aſia* and *Africk*, to be a good argument, and ſufficient to determine them, or there was no certain tradition

† Και γαρ εισι τινες ὡ φιλοι ἐλεγον ἀπο τῳ ἡμετερῳ γενους ὁμολογενεις ἀυτον Χριστον ειναι, ἀνθρωπον δε ἐξ ἀνθρωπων γενομενον ἀποφαινομενοι, οις ὐ συντιθεμαι, ὐδε αν πλειστοι ταυτα μοι δοξασαντες ἑποιεν, Juſtin Mart. dial. ad Tryph. Iud.

‡ Euſeb. l. 5. c. ult.

againſt

againſt them; for unleſs one of theſe two do it, nothing could excuſe them from oppoſing a known truth, unleſs peradventure St. *Cyprian*, *Firmilian*, the biſhops of *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, and almoſt two parts of the world were ignorant of ſuch a tradition, for they knew of none ſuch, and ſome of them expreſsly denied it. And the ſixth general ſynod approves of the canon made in the council of *Carthage* under *Cyprian* upon this very ground, becauſe in *prædictorum præſulum locis & ſolum ſecundum traditam eis conſuetudinem ſervatus eſt*; they had a particular tradition for rebaptization, and therefore there could be no tradition univerſal againſt it, or if there were they knew not of it, but much for the contrary; and then it would be remembered that a concealed tradition was like a ſilent thunder, or a law not promulgated; it neither was known, nor was obligatory. And I ſhall obſerve this too, that this very tradition was ſo obſcure, and was ſo obſcurely delivered, ſilently proclaimed, that St. †*Auſtin* who diſputed againſt the *Donatiſts* upon this very queſtion was not able to prove it, but by a conſequence which he thought probable and credible, as appears in his diſcourſe againſt the *Donatiſts*. *The Apoſtles*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, *preſcribed nothing in this particular: But this cuſtom which is contrary to Cyprian ought to be believed to have come from their tradition, as many other things which the catholick church obſerves.* That's all the ground and all the reaſon; nay the church did waver concerning that queſtion, and before the deciſion of a council, ‡ *Cyprian* and others might diſſent without breach of charity. It was plain then there was no clear tradition in the queſtion, poſſibly there might be a cuſtom in

* Can. 2. † L. 5. de baptiſm. contr. Donat. c. 23.
‡ Lib. 1. de baptiſm. c. 18.

ſome

ſome churches *poſtnate* to the times of the apoſtles, but nothing that was obligatory, no tradition apoſtolical. But this was a ſuppletory device ready at hand whenever they needed it; and * St. *Auſtin* confuted the *Pelagians*, in the queſtion of original ſin, by the cuſtom of exorciſm and inſufflation, which St. *Auſtin* ſaid came from the apoſtles by tradition, which yet was then, and is now ſo impoſſible to be proved, that he who ſhall affirm it, ſhall gain only the reputation of a bold man and a confident.

IV. 2. I conſider if the report of traditions in the primitive times ſo near the ages apoſtolical was ſo uncertain, that they were fain to aim at them by conjectures, and grope as in the dark, the uncertainty is much encreaſed ſince, becauſe there are many famous writers whoſe works are loſt, which yet if they had continued, they might have been good records to us, as *Clemens Romanus*, *Egeſippus*, *Nepos*, *Coracion*, *Dionyſius Areopagite*, of *Alexandria*, of *Corinth*, *Firmilian* and many more: And ſince we ſee pretences have been made without reaſon in thoſe ages where they might better have been confuted, than now they can, it is greater prudence to ſuſpect any later pretences, ſince ſo many ſects have been, ſo many wars, ſo many corruptions in authors, ſo many authors loſt, ſo much ignorance hath intervened, and ſo many intereſts have been ſerved, that now the rule is to be altered; and whereas it was of old time credible, that that was apoſtolical whoſe beginning they knew not, now quite contrary we cannot ſafely believe them to be apoſtolical unleſs we do know their beginning to have been from the apoſtles. For this conſiſting of probabilities and particulars, which put together make up a

* Depeccat. original. l. 2. c. 40. contra. Pelagi & Cæleſt.

moral

moral demonſtration, the argument which I now urge hath been growing theſe fifteen hundred years; and if anciently there was ſo much as to evacuate the authority of tradition, much more is there now abſolutely to deſtroy it, when all the particulars which time and infinite variety of human accidents have been amaſſing together, are now concentered, and are united by way of conſtipation. Becauſe every age and every great change, and every hereſy, and every intereſt hath increaſed the difficulty of finding out true traditions.

V. 3. There are very many traditions which are loſt, and yet they are concerning matters of as great conſequence as moſt of thoſe queſtions for the determination whereof traditions are pretended: It is more than probable, that as in baptiſm and the euchariſt the very forms of miniſtration are tranſmitted to us, ſo alſo in confirmation and ordination, and that there were eſpecial directions for viſitation of the ſick, and explicit interpretations of thoſe difficult places of St. *Paul* which St. *Peter* affirmed to be ſo difficult that the ignorant do wreſt them to their own damnation, and yet no church hath conſerved theſe, or thoſe many more which * St. *Baſil* affirms to be ſo many that ἐπιλειψη ἡμερα τα ἀγραφα της ἐκκλησιας μυςηρια διηγεμενον, the day would fail him in the very ſimple enumeration of all traditions eccleſiaſtical. And if the church hath failed in keeping the great variety of traditions, it will hardly be thought a fault in a private perſon to neglect tradition, which either the whole church hath very much neglected inculpably, or elſe the whole church is very much to blame. And who can aſcertain us that ſhe hath not enter-

* Cap 29, de ſpir. Sancto.

tained ſome which are no traditions as well as loſt thouſands that are? That ſhe did entertain ſome ſome falſe traditions, I have already proved; but it is alſo as probable that ſome of thoſe which theſe ages did propound for traditions, are not ſo, as it is certain that ſome which the firſt ages called traditions, were nothing leſs.

VI. 4. There are ſome opinions which when they began to be publickly received, began to be accounted prime traditions, and ſo became ſuch not by a native title, but by adoption; and nothing is more uſual than for the fathers to colour their popular opinion with ſo great an appellative. St. *Auſtin* called the communicating of infants an apoſtolical tradition, and yet we do not practiſe it, becauſe we diſbelieve the allegation. And that every cuſtom, which at firſt introduction was but a private fancy or ſingular practice, grew afterwards into a publick rite, and went for a tradition after a while continuance, appears by * *Tertullian* who ſeems to juſtify it, *Non enim exiſtimas tu licitum eſſe cuicunque fidelì conſtituere, quod Deo placere illi viſum fuerit, ad diſciplinam & ſalutem.* And again, † *A quocunque traditore cenſetur, nec authorem reſpicias ſed authoritatem.* And St. *Hierome* moſt plainly, ‡ *Præcepta majorum Apoſtolicas Tradiones quiſque exiſtimat.* And when *Irenæus* had obſerved that great variety in the keeping of Lent, which yet to be a forty days faſt is pretended to deſcend from tradition apoſtolical, ſome faſtingbut one day before Eaſter, ſome two, ſome forty, and this even long before *Irenæus*'s time, he gives this reaſon, *Varietas illa jejunii cœpit apud majores noſtros, qui non accurate conſuetudinem eorum qui vel ſimplicitate quadam vel privata authoritate in poſterum aliquid*

* Contra Marcion. † De coron. milit. c. 3. & 4. ‡ Apud Euſeb. l. 5. c. 24.

ſtatuiſſent,

ſtatuiſſent, obſervarant [*ex tranſlatione Chriſtophorſoni:*] And there are yet ſome points of good concernment, which if any man ſhould queſtion in a high manner, they would prove indeterminable by ſcripture, or ſufficient reaſon, and yet I doubt not their confident defenders would ſay they are opinions of the church, and quickly pretend a tradition from the very apoſtles, and believe themſelves ſo ſecure, that they could not be diſcovered, becauſe the queſtion never having been diſputed, gives them occaſion to ſay that which had no beginning known, was certainly from the apoſtles. For why ſhould not divines do in the queſtion of reconfirmation, as in that of rebaptization? Are not the grounds equal from an indelible character in one as in the other? and if it happen ſuch a queſtion as this after conteſtation ſhould be determined not by any poſitive decree, but by the ceſſion of one part, and the authority and reputation of the other, does not the next age ſtand fair to be abuſed with a pretence of tradition, in the matter of reconfirmation, which never yet came to a ſerious queſtion? for ſo it was in the queſtion of rebaptization, for which there was then no more evident tradition, than there is now in the queſtion of reconfirmation, (as I proved formerly) but yet it was carried upon that title.

VII. 5. There is great variety in the probation of tradition, ſo that whatever is proved to be tradition, is not equally and alike credible; for nothing but univerſal tradition is of itſelf credible; other traditions in their juſt proportion, as they partake of the degrees of univerſality. Now that a tradition be univerſal, or which is all one that it be a credible teſtimony, St. *Iræneus* requires, that tradition ſhould derive from all the churches

* Lib. 3. c. 4.

apoſtolical. And therefore according to this rule, there was no ſufficient medium to determine the queſtion about Eaſter, becauſe the eaſtern and weſtern churches had ſeveral traditions reſpectively, and both pretended from the apoſtles.* *Clemens Alexandrinus* † ſays, it was a ſecret Tradition from the apoſtles that Chriſt preached but one year: But ‡ *Iræneus* ſays it did derive from hereticks, and ſays that he by Tradition firſt from St. *John*, and then from his diſciples received another Tradition, that Chriſt was almoſt fifty years old when he died, and ſo by conſequence preached almoſt twenty years; both of them were deceived, and ſo had all that had believed the report of either pretending Tradition apoſtolical. Thus the cuſtom in the Latin church of faſting on ſaturday was againſt that Tradition which the Greeks had from the apoſtles; and therefore by this diviſion and want of conſent, which was the true Tradition was ſo abſolutely indeterminable, that both muſt needs loſe much of their reputation. But how then when not only particular churches but ſingle perſons are all the proof we have for a Tradition? and this often happened; I think St. *Auſtin* § is the chief argument and authority we have for the aſſumption of the Virgin *Mary*; the baptiſm of infants is called a tradition by *Origen* alone at firſt, and from him by others. The proceſſion of the holy ghoſt from the ſon, which is an article the greek church diſavows, derives from the tradition apoſtolical, as it is pretended; and yet before St. *Auſtin* we hear nothing of it very clearly

* Lib. 1. Stromat.

† Lib. 2. cap. 39.

‡ Omnes ſeniores teſtantur qui in Aſia apud Johannem Diſcipulum Domini convenerunt id ipſum tradidiſſe eis Johannem, &c. & qui alios apoſtolos viderunt hæc eadem ab ipſis audierunt, & teſtantur de ejuſmodi relatione.

§ Salmeron diſput. 51. in Rom.

or

or certainly, for as much as that whole myſtery concerning the bleſſed ſpirit was ſo little explicated in ſcripture, and ſo little derived to them by Tradition, that till the council of *Nice*, you ſhall hardly find any form of worſhip, or perſonal addreſs of devotion to the holy ſpirit, as *Eraſmus* obſerves, and I think the contrary will very hardly be verified. And for this particular in which I inſtance, whatſoever is in ſcripture concerning it, is againſt [illegible] which the church of *Rome* calls Tradition, [illegible]ich makes the Greeks ſo confident as they are of the point, and is an argument of the vanity of ſome things which for no greater reaſon are called Traditions, but becauſe one man hath ſaid ſo, and that they can be proved by no better argument to be true. Now in this caſe wherein Tradition deſcends upon us with unequal certainty, it would be very unequal to require of us an abſolute belief of every thing not written, for fear we be accounted to ſlight Tradition apoſtolical. And ſince nothing can require our ſupreme aſſent, but that which is truly catholick and apoſtolick, and to ſuch a Tradition is required as *Irenæus* ſays, the conſent of all thoſe churches which the apoſtles planted, and where they did preſide, this topick will be of ſo little uſe in judging hereſies that (beſides what is depoſited in ſcripture) it cannot be proved in any thing but in the canon of ſcripture itſelf, and as it is now received, even in that there is ſome variety.

VIII. And therefore there is wholly a miſtake in this buſineſs; for when the fathers appeal to Tradition, and with much earneſtneſs, and ſome clamour they call upon hereticks to conform to or to be tried by Tradition, it is ſuch a Tradition as delivers the fundamental points of Chriſtianity, which were alſo recorded in ſcripture. But becauſe the Canon was not yet perfectly conſigned,

they called to that teſtimony they had, which was the teſtimony of the churches apoſtolical, whoſe biſhops and prieſts being the *Antiſtites religionis*, did believe and preach chriſtian religion, and conſerve all its great myſteries, according as they had been taught. *Irenæus* calls this a Tradition apoſtolical, *Chriſtum accepiſſe calicem, & dixiſſe ſanguinem ſuum eſſe, & docuiſſe novam oblationem novi Teſtamenti, quam Eccleſia per Apoſtolos accipiens offert per totum mundum.* And the fathers in theſe ages confute hereticks by eccleſiaſtical Tradition, that is, they confront againſt their impious and blaſphemous doctrines that religion, which the apoſtles having taught to the churches where they did preſide, their ſucceſſors did ſtill preach, and for a long while together ſuffered not the enemy to ſow tares amongſt their wheat. And yet theſe doctrines which they called Traditions, were nothing but ſuch fundamental truths which were in ſcripture, παντα συμφωνα ταις γραφαις, as *Irenæus* in * *Euſebius* obſerves, in the inſtance of *Polycarpus*, and it is manifeſt by conſidering what hereſies they fought againſt, the hereſies of † *Ebion*, *Cerinthus*, *Nicolaitans*, *Valentinians*, *Carpocratians*, perſons that denied the ſon of God, the unity of the God-head, that preached impurity, that practiſed ſorcery and witch-craft. And now that they did rather urge Tradition againſt them than ſcripture, was, becauſe the publick doctrine of all the apoſtolical churches was at firſt more known and famous than many parts of the ſcripture, and becauſe ſome hereticks denied St. *Luke*'s goſpel, ſome received none but St. *Matthew*'s, ſome rejected all St. *Paul*'s epiſtles, and it was a long time before the whole canon was conſigned by univerſal teſtimony, ſome churches having one part ſome ano-

* Lib. 5. cap. 20. † Vide Irenæ. l. 3. & 4. cont. hæreſ.

ther,

ther; *Rome* herſelf had not all, ſo that in this caſe the argument from tradition was the moſt famous, the moſt certain, and the moſt prudent. And now according to this rule they had more Traditions than we have, and Traditions did by degrees leſſen as they came to be written, and their neceſſity was leſs, as the knowledge of them was aſcertained to us by a better keeper of divine truths. All that great myſteriouſneſs of Chriſt's prieſthood, the unity of his ſacrifice, Chriſt's advocation and interceſſion for us in heaven, and many other excellent doctrines might very well be accounted Traditions before St. *Paul*'s epiſtle to the *Hebrews* was publiſhed to all the world; but now they are written truths; and if they had not, poſſibly we might either have loſt them quite, or doubted of them, as we do of many other Traditions, by reaſon of the inſufficiency of the propounder. And therefore it was that St. * *Peter* took order that the goſpel ſhould be writ, for he had promiſed that he would do ſomething which after his deceaſe ſhould have theſe things in remembrance. He knew it was not ſafe truſting the report of men where the fountain might quickly run dry, or be corrupted ſo inſenſibly, that no cure could be found for it, nor any juſt notice taken of, it till it were incurable. And indeed there is ſcarce any thing but what is written in ſcripture, that can with any confidence of argument pretend to derive from the apoſtles, except rituals, and manners of miniſtration; but no doctrines or ſpeculative myſteries are ſo tranſmitted to us by ſo clear a current, that we may ſee a viſible channel, and trace it to the primitive fountains. It is ſaid to be a Tradition apoſtolical, that no prieſt ſhould baptiſe without chriſm and

* 2 Peter i. 13.

the command of the biſhop: ſuppoſe it were, yet we cannot be obliged to believe it with much confidence, becauſe we have but little proof for it, ſcarce any thing but the ſingle teſtimony of * St. *Hierom.* Add yet if it were, this is but a ritual, of which in paſſing by, I ſhall give that account: That, ſuppoſe this and many more rituals did derive clearly from tradition apoſtolical (which yet but very few do) yet it is hard that any church ſhould be charged with crime for not obſerving ſuch rituals, becauſe we ſee ſome of them which certainly did derive from the apoſtles, are expired and gone out in a deſuetude; ſuch as are abſtinence from blood, and from things ſtrangled, the cœnobitick life of ſecular perſons, the college of widows, to worſhip ſtanding upon the Lord's day, to give milk and honey to the newly baptiſed, and many more of the like nature; now there having been no mark to diſtinguiſh the neceſſity of one from the indifferency of the other, they are all alike neceſſary, or alike indifferent; if the former, why does no church obſerve them? if the latter, why does the church of *Rome* charge upon others the ſhame of novelty, for leaving off ſome rites and ceremonies which, by her own practice we are taught to have no obligation in them, but to be adiaphorous? St. *Paul* gave order, that a biſhop ſhould be the huſband of one wife; the church of *Rome* will not allow ſo much; other churches allow more: The apoſtles commanded chriſtians to faſt on Wedneſday and Friday, as appears in their canons; the church of *Rome* faſts Friday and Saturday, and not on Wedneſday: The apoſtles had their agapæ or love feaſts, we ſhould believe them ſcandalous: They uſed a kiſs of charity in ordinary addreſſes, the church

* Dialog. adv. Lucifer.

of

of *Rome* keeps it only in their maſs, other churches quite omit it: The apoſtles permitted prieſts and deacons to live in conjugal ſociety, as appears in the 5 can. of the apoſtles (which to them is an argument who believe them ſuch) and yet the church of *Rome*, by no means will endure it; nay more, *Michael Medina* gives teſtimony that of 84 canos apoſtolical which * *Clement* collected, ſcarce ſix or eight are obſerved by the latin church, and *Pereſius* gives this account of it † *In illis contineri multa quæ temporum corruptione non plenè obſervantur, aliis pro temporis & materiæ qualitate aut obliteratis, aut totius Eccleſiæ magiſterio abrogatis.* Now it were good that they who take a liberty to themſelves, ſhould alſo allow the ſame to others. So that for one thing or other, all Traditions, excepting thoſe very few that are abſolutely univerſal, will loſe all their obligation, and become no competent medium to confine men's practices, or limit their faiths, or determine their perſuaſions. Either for the difficulty of their being proved, the incompetency of the teſtimony that tranſmits them, or the indifferency of the thing tranſmitted, all Traditions both ritual and doctrinal are diſabled from determining our conſciences either to a neceſſary believing or obeying.

IX. 6. To which I add by way of confirmation, that there are ſome things called Traditions, and are offered to be proved to us by a teſtimony which is either falſe or not extant. *Clemens* of *Alexandria* pretended it a Tradition that the apoſtles preached to them that died in infidelity, even after their death, and then raiſed them to life, but he proved it only by the teſtimony of the book of *Hermes*; he affirmed it to be a Tra-

* De ſacr. hom. continent. lib. 5, cap. 105.
† De Tradit. part. 3. c. de Author. Can. Apoſt.

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dition apoſtolical, that the Greeks were ſaved by their philoſophy, but he had no other authority for it but the apocryphal books of *Peter* and *Paul*. *Tertullian* and St. *Baſil* pretend it an apoſtolical Tradition, to ſign in the air with the ſign of the croſs, but this was only conſigned to them in the goſpel of *Nicodemus*. But to inſtance once for all in the epiſtle of *Marcellus* to the biſhop of *Antioch*, where he affirms that it is the canon of the apoſtles, *præter ſententiam Romani Pontificis, non poſſe Concilia celebrari*. And yet there is no ſuch canon extant, nor ever was for aught appears in any record we have; and yet the collection of the canons is ſo intire, that though it hath ſomething more than what was apoſtolical, yet it hath nothing leſs. And now that I am caſually fallen upon an inſtance from the canons of the apoſtles, I conſider that there cannot in the world a greater inſtance be given how eaſy it is to be abuſed in the believing of Traditions. For 1. to the firſt 50. which many did admit for apoſtolical, 35 more were added, which moſt men now count ſpurious, all men call dubious, and ſome of them univerſally condemned by peremptory ſentence, even by them who are greateſt admirers of that collection, as 65. 67. and 8 4 5ths canons. For the firſt 50, it is evident that there are ſome things ſo mixt with them, and no mark of difference left, that the credit of all is much impaired, inſomuch that * *Iſidor* of *Seville* ſays; *they were apocryphal, made by hereticks, and publiſhed under the title apoſtolical, but neither the fathers nor the church of* Rome *did give aſſent to them*. And yet they have prevailed ſo far amongſt ſome, that † *Damaſcen* is of opinion they ſhould be received equally with

* Apud Gratian. diſt. 16. c. Canones.

† Lib. 4, c. 18. de Orthod. fide.

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the canonical writings of the apoſtles. One thing only I obſerve (and we ſhall find it true in moſt writings, whoſe authority is urged in queſtions of *Theology*) that the authority of the tradition is not it which moves the aſſent, but the nature of the thing; and becauſe ſuch a canon is delivered, they do not therefore believe the ſanction or propoſition ſo delivered, but diſbelieve the Tradition, if they do not like the matter, and ſo do not judge of the matter by the Tradition, but of the Tradition by the matter. And thus the church of *Rome* rejects the 84 or 85 canon of the apoſtles, not becauſe it is delivered with leſs authority, than the laſt 35 are, but becauſe it reckons the canon of ſcripture otherwiſe than it is at *Rome*. Thus alſo the fifth canon amongſt the firſt fifty, becauſe it approves the marriage of prieſts and deacons does not perſuade them to approve of it too, but itſelf becomes ſuſpected for approving it: So that either they accuſe themſelves of palpable contempt of the apoſtolical authority, or elſe that the reputation of ſuch Traditions is kept up to ſerve their own ends, and therefore when they encounter them, they are more to be upheld; which what elſe is it but to teach all the world to contemn ſuch pretences and undervalue Traditions, and to ſupply to others a reaſon why they ſhould do that, which to them that give the occaſion is moſt unreaſonable?

X. 7. The teſtimony of the antient church being the only means of proving Tradition, and ſometimes their dictates and doctrine being the Tradition pretended of neceſſity to be imitated, it is conſiderable that men in their eſtimate of it, take their riſe from ſeveral ages and differing teſtimonies, and are not agreed about the competency of their teſtimony; and the reaſons that on each ſide make them differ, are ſuch as make the

authority

authority itſelf the leſs authentick and more repudiable. Some will allow only of the three firſt ages, as being moſt pure, moſt perſecuted, and therefore moſt holy, leaſt intereſted, ſerving fewer deſigns, having feweſt factions, and therefore more likely to ſpeak the truth for God's ſake and its own, as beſt complying with their great end of acquiring heaven in recompence of loſing their lives: Others * ſay, that thoſe ages being perſecuted minded the preſent doctrines proportionable to their purpoſes and conſtitution of the ages, and make little or nothing of thoſe queſtions which at this day vex Chriſtendom: And both ſpeak true: The firſt ages ſpeak greateſt truth, but leaſt pertinently. The next ages, the ages of the four general councils ſpake ſomething, not much more pertinently to the preſent queſtions, but were not ſo likely to ſpeak true, by reaſon of their diſpoſitions, contrary to the capacity and circumſtances of the firſt ages; and if they ſpeak wiſely as doctors, yet not certainly as witneſſes of ſuch propoſitions which the firſt ages noted not; and yet unleſs they had noted, could not poſſibly be Traditions. And therefore either of them will be leſs uſeleſs as to our preſent affairs. For indeed the queſtions which now are the publick trouble, were not conſidered or thought upon for many hundred years, and therefore prime Tradition there is none as to our purpoſe, and it will be an inſufficient medium to be uſed or pretended in the determination; and to diſpute concerning the truth or neceſſity of Traditions, in the queſtions of our times, is as if hiſtorians diſputing about a queſtion in the Engliſh ſtory, ſhould fall on wrangling whether *Livie* or *Plutarch* were the beſt writers: And the earneſt diſputes about Tra-

* Vid. Card. Perron. lettre au Sieur Caſaubon.

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ditions are to no better purpoſe. For no church at this day admits the one half of thoſe things, which certainly by the fathers were called Traditions apoſtolical, and no teſtimony of ancient writers does conſign the one half of the preſent queſtions to be or not to be Traditions. So that they, who admit only the doctrine and teſtimony of the firſt ages, cannot be determined in moſt of their doubts which now trouble us, becauſe their writings are of matters wholly differing from the preſent diſputes, and they who would bring in after ages to the authority of a competent judge or witneſs, ſay the ſame thing; for they plainly confeſs that the firſt ages ſpake little or nothing to the preſent queſtion, or at leaſt nothing to their ſenſe of them; for therefore they call in aid from the following ages, and make them ſuppletory and auxiliary to their deſigns, and therefore there are no Traditions to our purpoſes. And they who would willingly have it otherwiſe, yet have taken no courſe it ſhould be otherwiſe; for they when they had opportunity in the councils of the laſt ages to determine what they had a mind to, yet they never named the number, nor expreſſed the particular Traditions which they would fain have the world believe to be apoſtolical: But they have kept the bridle in their own hands, and made a reſerve of their own power, that if need be, they may make new pretenſions, or not be put to it to juſtify the old by the engagement of a conciliary declaration.

XI. Laſtly, We are acquitted by the Teſtimony of the primitive fathers from any other neceſſity of believing, than of ſuch articles as are recorded in ſcripture: And this is done by them, whoſe authority is pretended the greateſt argument for Tradition, as appears largely in *Irenæus*, who diſputes profeſſedly for the ſufficiency

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of ſcripture againſt certain hereticks, who affirm ſome neceſſary truths not to be written *. It was an excellent ſaying of St. *Baſil* and will never be wiped out with all the eloquence of *Perron* [in his Serm. *de fide*. *Manifeſtus eſt fidei lapſus, & liquidum ſuperbiæ vitium vel reſpuere aliquid eorum quæ ſcriptura habet, vel inducere quicquam quod ſcriptum non eſt.*] And it is but a poor device to ſay that every particular Tradition is conſigned in ſcripture by thoſe places which give authority to Tradition; and ſo the introducing of Tradition is not a ſuperinducing any thing over or beſides ſcripture, becauſe Tradition is like a meſſenger, and the ſcripture is like his letters of credence, and therefore authorizes whatſoever Tradition ſpeaketh. For ſuppoſing ſcripture does conſign the authority of Tradition (which it might do before all the whole inſtrument of ſcripture itſelf was conſigned, and then afterwards there might be no need of Tradition) yet ſuppoſing it, it will follow that all thoſe Traditions which are truly prime and apoſtolical, are to be entertained according to the intention of the deliverers, which indeed is ſo reaſonable of itſelf, that we need not ſcripture to perſuade us to it; itſelf is authentick as ſcripture is, if it derives from the ſame fountain; and a word is never the more the word of God for being written, nor the leſs for not being written; but it will not follow that whatſoever is pretended to be Tradition, is ſo, neither is the credit of the particular inſtances conſigned in ſcripture; *& doloſus verſatur in generalibus*, but that this craft is too palpable. And if a general and indefinite conſignation of Tradition be ſufficient to warrant every particular that pretends to be Tradition, then St. *Baſil* had ſpoken to no purpoſe by ſaying it is pride and apoſtacy

* L. 3. c. 2. contr. hæreſ.

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from the faith, to bring in what is not written: For if either any man brings in what is written, or what he ſays is delivered, then the firſt being expreſs ſcripture, and the ſecond being conſigned in ſcripture, no man can be charged with ſuperinducing what is not written, he hath his anſwer ready: And then theſe are zealous words abſolutely to no purpoſe; but if ſuch general conſignation does not warrant every thing that pretends to Tradition, but only ſuch as are truly proved to be apoſtolical; then ſcripture is uſeleſs as to this particular; for ſuch Tradition gives teſtimony to ſcripture, and therefore is of itſelf firſt, and more credible, for it is credible of itſelf; and therefore unleſs St. *Baſil* thought that all the will of God in matters of faith and doctrine were written, I ſee not what end nor what ſenſe he could have in theſe words: For no man in the world except *Enthuſiaſts* and mad-men ever obtruded a doctrine upon the church, but he pretended ſcripture for it or Tradition, and therefore no man could be preſſed by theſe words, no man confuted, no man inſtructed, no not *Enthuſiaſts* or *Montaniſts*. For ſuppoſe either of them ſhould ſay, that ſince in ſcripture the Holy Ghoſt is promiſed to abide with the church for ever, to teach, whatever they pretend the ſpirit in any age hath taught them, is not to ſuper-induce any thing beyond what is written, becauſe the truth of the ſpirit, his veracity, and his perpetual teaching being promiſed and atteſted in ſcripture, ſcripture hath juſt ſo conſigned all ſuch Revelations as *Perron* ſaith it hath all ſuch Traditions. But I will trouble myſelf no more with arguments from any human authorities; but he that is ſurpriſed with the belief of ſuch authorities, and will but conſider the very many teſtimonies of antiquity

antiquity to this purpoſe, as of [a] *Conſtantine*, [b] St. *Hierom*, [c] St. *Auſtin*, [d] St. *Athanaſius*, [e] St. *Hilary*, [f] St. *Epiphanius*, and divers others, all ſpeaking words to the ſame ſenſe, with that ſaying of [g] St. *Paul*, *Nemo ſentiat ſuper quod ſcriptum eſt*, will ſee that there is reaſon, that ſince no man is materially a hetetick, but he that errs in a point of faith, and all faith is ſufficiently recorded in ſcripture, the judgment of faith and hereſy is to be derived from thence, and no man is to be condemned for diſſenting in an article for whoſe probation Tradition only is pretended; only according to the degree of its evidence, let every one determine himſelf, but of this evidence we muſt not judge for others; for unleſs it be in things of faith, and abſolute certainties, evidence is a word of relation, and ſo ſuppoſes two terms, the object and the faculty; and it is an imperfect ſpeech to ſay a thing is evident in itſelf (unleſs we ſpeak of firſt principles or cleareſt revelations) for that may be evident to one that is not ſo to another, by reaſon of the pregnancy of ſome apprehenſions, and the immaturity of others.

This diſcourſe hath its intention in Traditions doctrinal and ritual, that is ſuch Traditions which propoſe articles new *in materiâ*; but now if ſcripture be the repoſitory of all divine truths ſufficient for us, Tradition muſt be conſidered as its inſtrument, to convey its great myſteriouſneſs to our underſtandings; it is ſaid there are traditive interpretations as well as traditive propoſitions, but theſe have not much diſtinct conſideration in them, both becauſe their uncertainty is as great as the other upon the former conſiderations; as

[a] Orat. ad Nicen. PP. apud. Theodor. l. 1. c. 7. [b] In Matth. l. 4. c. 23. & in Agæum. [c] De bono vi. duil. c. 1. [d] Orat. contr. gent. [e] In Pſal. 132. [f] L. 2. c. contra. hereſ. tom. 1. hær. 61. [g] 1 Cor. 4.

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alſo becauſe in very deed, there are no ſuch things as traditive interpretations univerſal: For as for particulars, they ſignify no more but that they are not ſufficient determinations of queſtions theological, therefore becauſe they are particular, contingent, and of infinite variety, and they are no more argument than the particular authority of theſe men whoſe commentaries they are, and therefore muſt be conſidered with them.

XII. The ſum is this: Since the Fathers who are the beſt witneſſes of Traditions, yet were infinitely deceived in their account, ſince ſometimes they gueſſed at them, and conjectured by way of rule and diſcourſe, and not of their knowledge, not by evidence of the thing; ſince many are called Traditions which were not ſo, many are uncertain whether they were or no, yet confidently pretended; and this uncertainty which at firſt was great enough, is increaſed by infinite cauſes and accidents in the ſucceſſion of 1600 years; ſince the church hath been either ſo careleſs or ſo abuſed, that ſhe could not, or would not preſerve Traditions with carefulneſs and truth; ſince it was ordinary for the old writers to ſet out their own fancies, and the rites of their church, which had been ancient under the ſpecious title of apoſtolical Traditions; ſince ſome Traditions rely but upon ſingle teſtimony at firſt, and yet deſcending upon others, come to be atteſted by many, whoſe teſtimony though conjunct, yet in value is but ſingle, becauſe it relies upon the firſt ſingle relator, and ſo can have no greater authority, or certainty, than they derive from the ſingle perſon; ſince the firſt ages who were moſt competent to conſign Tradition, yet did conſign ſuch Traditions, as be of a nature wholly diſcrepant from the preſent queſtions, and ſpeak nothing at all, or very imperfectly, to ourpurpoſes; and the follow-

ing ages are no fit witneſſes of that which was not tranſmitted to them, becauſe they could not know it at all, but by ſuch tranſmiſſion and prior conſignation; ſince what at firſt was a Tradition, came afterwards to be written, and ſo ceaſed its being a Tradition; yet the credit of Traditions commenced upon the certainty and reputation of thoſe truths firſt delivered by word, afterward conſigned by writing; ſince what was certainly Tradition apoſtolical, as many rituals were, are rejected by the church in ſeveral ages, and are gone out into a deſuetude; and laſtly, ſince, beſide the no neceſſity of Traditions, there being abundantly enough in ſcripture, there are many things called Traditions by the fathers, which they themſelves either proved by no authors, or by apocryphal and ſpurious and heretical, the matter of Tradition will in very much be ſo uncertain, ſo falſe, ſo ſuſpicious, ſo contradictory, ſo improbable, ſo unproved, that if a queſtion be conteſted and be offered to be proved only by a Tradition, it will be very hard to impoſe ſuch a propoſition to the belief of all men with any imperiouſneſs or reſolved determination, but it will be neceſſary men ſhould preſerve the liberty of believing and propheſying, and not part with it, upon a worſe merchandiſe and exchange than *Eſau* made for his birth-right.

SECT.



SECT. VI.

Of the uncertainty and inſufficiency of Councils Eccleſiaſtical.

BUT ſince we are all this while in uncertainty, it is neceſſary that we ſhould addreſs ourſelves ſomewhere, where we may reſt the ſoal of our foot; And nature, ſcripture, and experience teach the world in matters of queſtion to ſubmit to ſome final ſentence. For it is not reaſon that controverſies ſhould continue, till the erring perſon ſhall be willing to condemn himſelf; and the ſpirit of God hath directed us by that great precedent at *Jeruſalem*, to addreſs ourſelves to the church, that in a plenary council and aſſembly, ſhe may ſynodically determine controverſies. So that if a general council have determined a queſtion, or expounded ſcripture, we may no more diſbelieve the decree, than the ſpirit of God himſelf who ſpeaks in them. And indeed, if all aſſemblies of biſhops were like that firſt, and all biſhops were of the ſame ſpirit of which the apoſtles were, I ſhould obey their decree with the ſame religion as I do them whoſe preface was *Viſum eſt ſpiritui ſancto & nobis:* And I doubt not but our bleſſed Saviour intended that the Aſſemblies of the church ſhould be judges of controverſies, and guides of our perſuaſions in matters of difficulty. But he alſo intended they ſhould proceed according to his will which he had revealed, and thoſe precedents which he had made authentick by the immediate aſſiſtance of his holy ſpirit: he hath done his part, but we do not ours. And if any private perſon in the ſimplicity and purity of his ſoul deſires to find out a truth of which he

is in ſearch and inquiſition, if he prays for wiſdom, we have a promiſe he ſhall be heard and anſwered liberally, and therefore much more, when the repreſentatives of the catholick church do meet, becauſe every perſon there hath *in individuo* a title to the promiſe, and another title as he is a governor and guide of ſouls, and all of them together have another title in their united capacity, eſpecially, if in that union they pray, and proceed with ſimplicity and purity; ſo that there is no diſputing againſt the pretence and promiſes, and authority of general councils. For if any one man can hope to be guided by God's ſpirit in the ſearch, the pious and impartial and unprejudicate ſearch of truth, then much more may a general council. If no private man can hope for it, then truth is not neceſſary to be found, nor are we obliged to ſearch for it, or elſe we are ſaved by chance: but if private men can by virtue of a promiſe, upon certain conditions be aſſured of finding out ſufficient truth, much more ſhall a general council. So that I conſider thus: There are many promiſes pretended to belong to general aſſemblies in the church; but I know not any ground, nor any pretence, that they ſhall be abſolutely aſſiſted, without any condition on their own parts, and whether they will or no: faith is a virtue as well as charity, and therefore conſiſts in liberty and choice, and hath nothing in it of neceſſity: There is no queſtion but that they are obliged to proceed according to ſome rule; for they expect no aſſiſtance by way of *Enthuſiaſm*; if they ſhould, I know no warrant for that, neither did any general council, ever offer a decree which they did not think ſufficiently proved by ſcripture, reaſon, or tradition, as appears in the acts of the councils; now then, if they be tyed to conditions it is their duty to obſerve them; but whether it be

be certain that they will obſerve them, that they will do all their duty, that they will not ſin even in this particular in the neglect of their duty, that's the conſideration. So that if any man queſtions the title and authority of general councels, and whether or no great promiſes appertain to them, I ſuppoſe him to be much miſtaken; but he alſo that thinks all of them have proceeded according to rule and reaſon, and that none of them were deceived, becauſe poſſibly they might have been truly directed, is a ſtranger to the hiſtory of the church, and to the perpetual inſtances and experiments of the faults and failings of humanity. It is a famous ſaying of St. *Gregory* that he had the four firſt councils in eſteem and veneration next to the four Evangeliſts; I ſuppoſe it was becauſe he did believe them to have proceeded according to rule, and to have judged righteous judgment; but why had not he the ſame opinion of other councils too, which were celebrated before his death, for he lived after the fifth general? not becauſe they had not the ſame authority; for that which is warrant for one is warrant for all; but becauſe he was not ſo confident that they did their duty, nor proceeded ſo without intereſt, as the firſt four had done, and the following councils did never get that reputation which all the catholick church acknowledged due to the firſt four. And in the next order were the three following generals; for the Greeks and Latins did never jointly acknowledge but ſeven generals to have been authentick in any ſenſe, becauſe they were in no ſenſe agreed that any more than ſeven had proceeded regularly and done their duty: ſo that now the queſtion is not whether general councels have a promiſe that the Holy Ghoſt will aſſiſt them; for every private man hath that promiſe, that if he does his duty, he

ſhall be aſſiſted ſufficiently in order to that end, to which he needs aſſiſtance; and therefore much more ſhall general councils in order to that end for which they convene, and to which they need aſſiſtance, that is, in order to the conſervation of the faith, for the doctrinal rules of good life, and all that concerns the eſſential duty of a chriſtian, but not in deciding queſtions to ſatisfy contentious or curious or preſumptuous ſpirits. But now can the biſhops ſo convened be factious, can they be abuſed with prejudice, or tranſported with intereſts, can they reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt, can they extinguiſh the ſpirit, can they ſtop their cares, and ſerve themſelves upon the holy ſpirit and the pretence of his aſſiſtances, and ceaſe to ſerve him upon themſelves, by captivating their underſtandings to his dictates, and their wills to his precepts? Is it neceſſary they ſhould perform any condition? is there any one duty for them to perform in theſe aſſemblies, a duty which they have power to do or not do? If ſo, then they may fail of it, and not do their duty: And if the aſſiſtance of the holy ſpirit be conditional, then we have no more aſſurance that they are aſſiſted, than that they do their duty and do not ſin.

II. Now let us ſuppoſe what this duty is: Certainly, if the goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt; and all that come to the knowledge of the truth, muſt come to it by ſuch means which are ſpiritual and holy diſpoſitions, in order to a holy and ſpiritual end. They muſt be ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace, that is, they muſt have peaceable and docible diſpoſitions, nothing with them that is violent, and reſolute to encounter thoſe gentle and ſweet aſſiſtances: and the rule they are to follow, is the rule which the holy ſpirit hath conſigned to the catholick church, that is the holy ſcripture, either entirely

entirely or at leaſt for the greater part of the rule *: So that now if the biſhops be factious and prepoſſeſſed with perſuaſions depending upon intereſt, it is certain they may judge amiſs; and if they recede from the rule, it is certain they do judge amiſs: and this I ſay upon their grounds who moſt advance the authority of general councils: for if a general council may err, if a Pope confirm it not, then moſt certainly if in any thing it recede from ſcripture, it does alſo err; becauſe, that they are to expect the pope's confirmation, they offer to prove from ſcripture: now if the pope's confirmation be required by authority of ſcripture, and that therefore the defailance of it does evacuate the authority of the council, then alſo are the councils decrees invalid, if they recede from any other part of ſcripture: ſo that ſcripture is the rule they are to follow, and a man would have thought it had been needleſs to have proved it, but that we are fallen into ages in which no truth is certain, no reaſon concluding, nor is there any thing that can convince ſome men. For *Stapleton* with extreme boldneſs againſt the piety of Chriſtendom, againſt the publick ſenſe of the ancient church, and the practiſe of all pious aſſemblies of biſhops, affirms the decrees of a council to be binding, *etiamſi non confirmetur ne probabili teſtimonio ſcripturarum*; nay, though it be quite *extra ſcripturam*: but all wiſe and good men have ever ſaid that ſenſe which St. *Hilary* expreſſed in theſe words, *Quæ extra Evangelium ſunt non defendam*; this was it which the good emperor *Conſtantine* ‡ propounded to the fathers met at *Nice*, *libri Evangelici, oracula Apoſtolorum, & veterum Pro-*

* Vid. Optat. Milev. l. 5. adv. Parm. Baldvin. in eundem. & St. Auguſt. in Pſa. 21. Expoſ. 2.

† Relect. controv. 4. q. 1. a. 3. ‡ I. 2. ad Conſtant.

phetarum clare nos inſtruunt quid ſentiendum in divinis *, and this is confeſſed by a ſober man of the Roman church itſelf, the cardinal of *Caſa*, *Oportet quod omnia talia quæ legere debent, contineantur in authoritatibus ſacrarum ſcripturarum* †. Now then all the advantage I ſhall take from hence, is this, That if the apoſtles commended them who examined their ſermons by their conformity to the law and the prophets, and the men of *Berea* were accounted noble for ſearching the ſcriptures whether thoſe things which they taught were ſo or no; I ſuppoſe it will not be denied, but the councils decrees, may alſo be tried whether they be conform to ſcripture yea or no; and although no man can take cognizance and judge the decrees of a council *pro authoritate publica*, yet *pro informatione privitâ* they may; the authority of a council is not greater than the authority of the apoſtles, nor their dictates more ſacred or authentick. Now then put caſe a council ſhould recede from ſcripture; whether or no were we bound to believe its decrees? I only aſk the queſtion: For it were hard to be bound to believe what to our underſtanding ſeems contrary to that which we know to be the word of God; But if we may lawfully recede from the councils decrees, in caſe they be contrariant to ſcripture, it is all that I require in this queſtion. For if they be tied to a rule, then they are to be examined and underſtood according to the rule, and then we are to give ourſelves that liberty of judgment which is requiſite to diſtinguiſh us from beaſts, and to put us into a capacity of reaſonable people, following reaſonable guides. But however, if it be certain that the councils are to follow ſcripture, then if it be no-

* Apud Theodor. l. 1. c. 7.
† Concord. Cathol. l. 2. c. 10.

torious

torious that they do recede from ſcripture, we are ſure we muſt obey God rather than men, and then we are well enough. For unleſs we are bound to ſhut our eyes, and not to look upon the ſun, if we may give ourſelves liberty to believe what ſeems moſt plain, and unleſs the authority of a council be ſo great a prejudice as to make us to do violence to our underſtanding, ſo as not to diſbelieve the decree, becauſe it ſeems contrary to ſcripture, but to believe it agrees with ſcripture, though we know not how, therefore becauſe the council hath decreed it, unleſs I ſay we be bound in duty to be ſo obediently blind, and ſottiſh, we are ſure that there are ſome councils which are pretended general, that have retired from the publick notorious words and ſenſe of ſcripture. For what wit of man can reconcile the decree of the thirteenth ſeſſion of the council of *Conſtance* with ſcripture, in which ſeſſion the half communion was decreed, in defiance of ſcripture, and with a *non obſtante* to Chriſt's inſtitution. For in the preface of the decree, Chriſt's inſtitution and the practice of the primitive church is expreſſed, and then with a *non obſtante*, communion in one kind is eſtabliſhed. Now then ſuppoſe the *non obſtante* in the form of words relates to the primitive practice; yet ſince Chriſt's inſtitution was taken notice of in the firſt words of the decree, and the decree made quite contrary to it, let the *non obſtante* relate whither it will, the decree (not to call it a defiance) is a plain receſſion from the inſtitution of Chriſt, and therefore the *non obſtante* will refer to that without any ſenſible error; and indeed for all the excuſes to the contrary, the decree was not ſo diſcreetly framed but that in the very form of words, the defiance and the *non obſtante* is too plainly relative to the firſt words. For what ſenſe can there be

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in the firſt *licet* elſe? *licet Chriſtus in utraque ſpecie*, and *licet eccleſia primitiva, &c. tamen hoc non obſtante, &c.* the firſt *licet* being a relative term, as well as the ſecond *licet*, muſt be bounded with ſome correſpondent. But it matters not much; let them whom it concerns enjoy the benefit of all excuſes they can imagine, it is certain Chriſt's inſtitution and the councils ſanction are as contrary as light and darkneſs. Is it poſſible for any man to contrive a way to make the decree of the council of *Trent*, commanding the publick offices of the church to be in Latin, friends with the fourteenth chapter of the *Corinthians*? It is not amiſs to obſerve how the hyperaſpiſts of that council ſweat to anſwer the allegations of St. *Paul*, and the wiſeſt of them do it ſo extremely poor, that it proclaims to all the world that the ſtrongeſt man that is, cannot eat iron, or ſwallow a rock. Now then, would it not be an unſpeakable tyranny to all wiſe perſons, (who as much hate to have their ſouls enſlaved as their bodies impriſoned) to command them to believe that theſe decrees are agreeable to the word of God? Upon whoſe underſtanding ſoever theſe are impoſed, they may at the next ſeſſion reconcile them to a crime, and make any ſin ſacred, or perſuade him to believe propoſitions contradictory to a mathematical demonſtration. All the arguments in the world that can be brought to prove the infallibility of councils, cannot make it ſo certain that they are infallible, as theſe two inſtances do prove infallibly that theſe were deceived, and if ever we may ſafely make uſe of our reaſon and conſider whether councils have erred or no, we cannot by any reaſon be more aſſured, that they have or have not, than we have in theſe particulars: ſo that either our reaſon is of no manner of uſe, in the diſcuſſion of this queſtion, and the thing

thing itſelf is not at all to be diſputed, or if it be, we are certain that theſe actually were deceived, and we muſt never hope for a clearer evidence in any diſpute. And if theſe be, others might have been, if they did as theſe did, that is, depart from their rule. And it was wiſely ſaid of *Cuſanus*: † *Notandum eſt experimento rerum univerſale concilium poſſe deficere*: The experience of it is notorious, that councils have erred: And all the arguments againſt experience are but plain ſophiſtry.

III. And therefore I make no ſcruple to ſlight the decrees of ſuch councils, wherein the proceedings were as prejudicate and unreaſonable, as in the council wherein *Abailardus* was condemned, where the preſidents having pronounced *Damnamus*, they at the lower end being awaked at the noiſe, heard the latter part of it, and concurred as far as *Mnamus* went, and that was as good as *Damnamus*, for if they had been awake at the pronouncing the whole word, they would have given ſentence accordingly. But by this means St. * *Bernard* numbered the major part of voices againſt his adverſary *Abailardus*: And as far as theſe men did do their duty, the duty of prieſts and judges, and wiſe men; ſo we may preſume them to be aſſiſted; but no further. But I am content this (becauſe but a private aſſembly) ſhall paſs for no inſtance: But what ſhall we ſay of all the Arrian councils celebrated with ſo great fancy, and ſuch numerous aſſemblies? we all ſay that they erred. And it will not be ſufficient to ſay they were not lawful councils: For they were convened by that authority which all the world knows did at that time convocate councils,

† Lib, 2. cap. 14. Concord Cathol.
* Epiſt. Abailardi. ad Heliſſ. conjugem.

and

and by which (as it is † confeſſed and is notorious) the firſt eight generals did meet, that is by the authority of the emperor all were called, and as many and more did come to them, than came to the moſt famous council of *Nice*: So that the councils were lawful, and if they did not proceed lawfully, and therefore did err, this is to ſay that councils are then not deceived, when they do their duty, when they judge impartially, when they decline intereſt, when they follow their rule; but this ſays alſo that it is not infallibly certain that they will do ſo; for theſe did not, and therefore the others may be deceived as well as they were. But another thing is in the wind; for councils not confirmed by the Pope, have no warrant that they ſhall not err, and they not being confirmed, therefore failed. But whether is the Pope's confirmation after the decree or before? It cannot be ſuppoſed before; for there is nothing to be confirmed till the decree be made, and the article compoſed. But if it be after, then poſſibly the Pope's decree may be requiſite in ſolemnity of law, and to make the authority popular, publick and human; but the decree is true or falſe before the Pope's confirmation, and is not at all altered by the ſupervening decree, which being *poſtnate* to the decree, alters not what went before, *Nunquam enim creſcit ex poſt facto præteriti æſtimatio*, is the voice both of law and reaſon. So that it cannot make it divine, and neceſſary to be heartily believed. It may make it lawful, not make it true, that is, it may poſſibly by ſuch means become a law but not a truth. I ſpeak now upon ſuppoſition the Pope's confirmation were neceſſary, and required to the making of conciliary and neceſſary ſanctions. But if it were, the caſe were very hard: For ſuppoſe

† Cuſanus, l. 2. cap. 25. Concord.

a hereſy

a hereſy ſhould invade, and poſſeſs the chair of *Rome*, what remedy can the church have in that caſe, if a general council be of no authority without the Pope confirm it? will the Pope confirm a counſel againſt himſelf; will he condemn his own hereſy? That the Pope may be a Heretick appears in the * canon law, which ſays he may for hereſy be depoſed, and therefore by a counſel which in this caſe hath plenary authority without the Pope. And therefore in the ſynod at *Rome* held under Pope *Adrian* the ſecond, the cenſure of the ſixth ſynod againſt *Honorius* who was convict of hereſy, is approved with this appendix, that in this caſe, the caſe of hereſy, *minores poſſint de majoribus judicare*: And therefore if a Pope were above a council, yet when the queſtion is concerning hereſy, the caſe is altered; the Pope may be judged by his inferiors, who in this caſe, which is the main caſe of all, become his ſuperiors. And it is little better than impudence to pretend that all councils were confirmed by the Pope, or that there is a neceſſity in reſpect of divine obligation, that any ſhould be confirmed by him, more than by another of the patriarchs. For the council of *Chalcedon* itſelf one of thoſe four which St. *Gregory* did revere next to the four evangeliſts, is rejected by Pope *Leo*, who in his 53d epiſtle to *Anatolius*, and in his 54th to *Martian*, and in his 55th to *Pulcheria*, accuſes it of ambition and inconſiderate temerity, and therefore no fit aſſembly for the habitation of the holy ſpirit, and *Gelaſius* in his tome *de vinculo Anathematis*, affirms that the council is in part to be received, in part to be rejected, and compares it to heretical books of a mixt matter, and proves his

* Diſt. 40. Can. ſi Papa.

aſſertion

assertion by the place of St. *Paul*, * *Omnia probate, quod bonum est retinete.* And *Bellarmine* says the same; *In Concilio Chalcedonensi quædam sunt bona, quædam mala, quædam recipienda, quædam rejicienda; ita & in libris hæreticorum,* and if any thing be false, then all is questionable, and judicable and discernable, and not infallible antecedently. And however, that council hath *ex post facto,* and by the voluntary consenting of after ages obtained great reputation; yet they that lived immediately after it, that observed all the circumstances of the thing, and the disabilities of the persons, and the uncertainty of the truth of its decrees, by reason of the unconcludingness of the arguments brought to attest it, were of another mind, † *Quod autem ad Concilium Chalcedonense attinet, illud id temporis (viz. Anastasii Imp.) neque palam in Ecclesiis sanctissimis prædicatum fuit, neque ab omnibus rejectum, nam singuli Ecclesiarum præsides pro suo arbitratu in ea re egerunt.* And so did all men in the world that were not mastered with prejudices and undone in their understanding with accidental impertinencies; they judged upon those grounds which they had and saw, and suffered not themselves to be bound to the imperious dictates of other men, who are as uncertain in their determinations as others in their questions. And it is an evidence that there is some deception, and notable error either in the thing or in the manner of their proceeding, when the decrees of a council shall have no authority from the compilers, nor strength from the reasonableness of the decision, but from the accidental approbation of posterity. And if posterity had pleased, *Origen* had believed well and been an orthodox person. And it was

* De Iaicis, l. 3. c. 20. §. ad hoc. ult.
† Evagr. lib. 3. cap. 30.

pretty

pretty ſport to ſee that *Papias* was right for two ages together, and wrong ever ſince; and juſt ſo it was in councils, particularly in this of *Chalcedon*, that had a fate alterable according to the age, and according to the climate, which to my underſtanding is nothing elſe but an argument that the buſineſs of infallibility is a later device, and commenced to ſerve ſuch ends as cannot be juſtified by true and ſubſtantial grounds, and that the Pope ſhould confirm it as of neceſſity, is a fit cover for the ſame diſh.

IV. In the ſixth general council, *Honorius* Pope of *Rome* was condemned; did that council ſtay for the Pope's confirmation before they ſent forth their decree? certainly they did not think it ſo needful, as that they would have ſuſpended or caſſated the decree, in caſe the Pope had then diſavowed it: For beſides the condemnation of Pope *Honorius* for hereſy, the 13th and 55th canons of that council are expreſsly againſt the cuſtom of the church of *Rome*. But this particular is involved in that new queſtion, whether the Pope be above a council. Now ſince the conteſtation of this queſtion, there was never any free or lawful council that determined for the Pope, it is not likely any ſhould, and is it likely that any Pope will confirm a council that does not? For the council of * *Baſil* is therefore condemned by the laſt lateran, which was an aſſembly in the Pope's own palace, and the council of *Conſtance* is of no value in this queſtion, and ſlighted in a juſt proportion, as that article is diſbelieved. But I will not much trouble the queſtion with a long conſideration of this particular; the pretence is ſenſeleſs and illiterate, againſt reaſon and experience, and already determined by St. *Auſtin* ſufficiently

* Vide poſtea de Concil. Sinveſſano. §. 6. N. 9.

as

as to this particular, † *Ecce putemus illos Epiſcopos qui Romæ judicaverunt non bonos judices fuiſſe. Reſtabat adhuc plenarium Eccleſiæ univerſæ Concilium ubi etiam cum ipſis judicibus cauſa poſſit agitari, ut ſi male judicaſſe convicti eſſent, eorum ſententiæ ſolverentur.* For ſince Popes may be parties, may be ſimoniacks, ſchiſmaticks, hereticks, it is againſt reaſon that in their own cauſes, they ſhould be judges, or that in any cauſes they ſhould be ſuperior to their judges. And as it againſt reaſon, ſo is it againſt all experience too; for the council *Sinueſſanum* (as it ſaid) was convened to take cogniſance of Pope *Marcellinus*; and divers councils were held at *Rome* to give judgment in the cauſes of *Damaſus*, *Sixtus* the IIId. *Symmachus*, and *Leo* III. and IV. as is to be ſeen in *Platina*, and the *Tomes* of the councils. And it is no anſwer to this and the like allegations to ſay in matters of fact and human conſtitution, the Pope may be judged by a council, but in matters of faith all the world muſt ſtand to the Pope's determination and authoritative deciſion: For if the Pope can by any colour pretend to any thing, it is to a ſupreme judicature in matters eccleſiaſtical, poſitive and of fact; and if he fails in this pretence, he will hardly hold up his head for any thing elſe; for the ancient biſhops derived their faith from the fountain, and held that in the higheſt tenure, even from Chriſt their head; but by reaſon of the imperial * city it became the principal ſeat, and he ſurprized the higheſt judicature, partly by the conceſſion of others, partly by his own accidental advantages, and yet even in theſe things altho' he was *major ſingulis*, yet he was *minor univerſis*. ‡

† Epiſt. 162. ad Glorium.
* Vide Concil. Chalced act. 15.
‡ Act. ult. can. 21.

And

And this is no more than what was decreed of the eighth general ſynod; which if it be ſenſe, is pertinent to this queſtion; for general councils are appointed to take cognizance of queſtions and differences about the biſhop of *Rome*, *non tamen audacter in eum ferre ſententiam:* By *audacter*, as is ſuppoſed, is meant *præcipitanter* haſtily and unreaſonably; but if to give ſentence againſt him be wholly forbidden, it is nonſenſe, for to what purpoſe is an authority of taking cognizance, if they have no power of giving ſentence, unleſs it were to defer it to a ſuperior judge, which in this caſe cannot be ſuppoſed? for either the Pope himſelf is to judge his own cauſe after their examination of him, or the general council is to judge him: So that although the council is by that decree enjoined to proceed modeſtly and warily, yet they may proceed to ſentence, or elſe the decree is ridiculous and impertinent.

V. But to clear all, I will inſtance in matters of queſtion and opinion: For not only ſome councils have made their decrees without or againſt the Pope, but ſome councils have had the Pope's confirmation, and yet have not been the more legitimate or obligatory, but are known to be heretical. For the canons of the ſixth ſynod, altho' ſome of them were made againſt the Popes, and the cuſtom of the church of *Rome*, a Pope a while after did confirm the council, and yet the canons are impious and heretical, and ſo eſteemed by the church of *Rome* herſelf. I inſtance in the ſecond canon, which approves of that ſynod of *Carthage* under *Cyprian* for rebaptization of hereticks, and the 72d canon that diſſolves marriage between perſons of differing perſuaſion in matters of chriſtian religion; and yet theſe canons were approved by Pope *Adrian* I. who in his epiſtle to *Tharaſius*, which is in the ſecond action of the

ſeventh ſynod calls them *Canones divine & legaliter prædicatos.* And theſe canons were uſed by Pope *Nicholas* I. in his epiſtle *ad Michaelem*, and by *Innocent* III. *c. a multis. extra. de ætat. ordinandorum.* So that now (that we may apply this) there are ſeven general councils which by the church of *Rome* are condemned of error. The * council of *Antioch*, *A. D.* 345. in which St. *Athanaſius* was condemned: The council of *Millaine*, *A. D.* 354. of above 300 biſhops: The council of *Ariminum*, conſiſting of 600 biſhops: The ſecond † council of *Epheſus*, *A. D.* 449. in which the *Eutychian* hereſy was confirmed, and the patriarch *Flavianus* killed by the faction of *Dioſcorus*: The council of *Conſtantinople* under *Leo Iſaurus*, *A. D.* 730: And another at *Conſtantinople* 35 years after: and laſtly, the council of *Piſa* 134 years ſince. Now that theſe general councils are condemned, is a ſufficient argument that councils may err; and it is no anſwer to ſay they were not confirmed by the Pope; for the Pope's confirmation I have ſhewn not to be neceſſary, or if it were, yet even that alſo is an argument that general councils may become invalid, either by their own fault, or by ſome extrinſecal ſupervening accident, either of which evacuates their authority; and whether all that is required to the legitimation of a council, was actually obſerved in any council, is ſo hard to determine, that no man can be infallibly ſure that ſuch a council is authentick and ſufficient probation.

VI. 2. And that is the ſecond thing I ſhall obſerve, there are ſo many queſtions concerning the

* Vide Socrat. l. 2. c. 5. & Sozom. l. 3. c. 5.

† Gregor. in Regiſt. lib. 3. cauſ. 7. ait. concilium Numidiæ erraſſe. Concilium Aquiſgrani erravit. De raptore & raptâ diſt. 20. can de libellis. in gloſſâ.

efficient,

efficient, the form, the matter of general councils, and their manner of proceeding, and their final ſanction, that after a queſtion is determin'd by a conciliary aſſembly, there are perhaps 20 more queſtions to be diſputed before we can with confidence either believe the council upon its mere authority, or obtrude it upon others. And upon this ground, how eaſy it is to elude the preſſure of an argument drawn from the authority of a general council, is very remarkable in the queſtion about the Pope's or the council's ſuperiority, which queſtion although it be defined for the council againſt the Pope by five general councils, the council of *Florence*, of *Conſtance*, of *Baſil*, of *Piſa*, and one of the *Lateran*'s, yet the jeſuits to this day, account this queſtion *pro non definita*, and have rare pretences for their eſcape; as firſt, It is true, a council is above a Pope, in caſe there be no Pope, or he uncertain; which is *Bellarmine*'s anſwer, never conſidering whether he ſpake ſenſe or no, nor yet remembering that the council of *Baſil* depoſed *Eugenius* who was a true Pope and ſo acknowledged. Secondly, ſometimes the Pope did not confirm theſe councils, that's their anſwer: (and although it was an exception that the fathers never thought of, when they were preſſed with the authority of the council of *Ariminum* or *Syrmium*, or any other *Arrian* convention;) yet the council of *Baſil* was convened by Pope *Martin* V. then, in its ſixteenth ſeſſion, declared by *Eugenius* the IVth, to be lawfully continued and confirmed expreſsly in ſome of its decrees by Pope *Nicholas*, and ſo ſtood till it was at laſt rejected by *Leo* X. very many years after; but that came too late, and with too viſible an intereſt; and this council did decree *fide Catholica tenendum Concilium eſſe ſupra Papam:* but if one Pope confirms it, and another rejects it, as it happened in this caſe and in many more, does it not

deſtroy the competency of the authority? and we ſee it by this inſtance, that it ſo ſerves the turns of men, that it is good in ſome caſes, that is, when it makes for them, and invalid when it makes againſt them. Thirdly, but it is a little more ridiculous in the caſe of the council of *Conſtance*, whoſe decrees were confirmed by *Martin* V. But that this may be no argument againſt them, *Bellarmine* tells you he only confirm'd thoſe things *quæ facta fuerant conciliariter, re diligenter examinata*, of which there being no mark, nor any certain rule to judge it, it is a device that may evacuate any thing we have a mind to, it was not done *Conciliariter*, that is, not according to our mind; for *Conciliariter* is a fine new nothing, that may ſignify what you pleaſe. Fourthly, but other devices yet more pretty they have: As, whether the council of *Lateran* was a general council or no, they know not, nor will know) which is a wiſe and plain reſervation of their own advantages, to make it general or not general, as ſhall ſerve their turns. Fifthly, as for the council of *Florence*, they are not ſure, whether it hath defined the queſtion *ſatis aperte*; *aperte* they will grant, if you will allow them not *ſatis aperte*. Sixthly and laſtly, the council of *Piſa* is *neque approbatum neque reprobatum*, which is the greateſt folly of all and moſt prodigious vanity; ſo that by ſomething or other, either they were not convened lawfully, or they did not proceed *Conciliariter*, or it is not certain that the council was general or no, or whether the council were *approbatum, or reprobatum*, or elſe it is *partim confirmatum partim reprobatum*, or elſe it is, *neque approbatum neque reprobatum*; by one of theſe ways or a device like to theſe, all councils and all decrees

• Bellar. de conc. l. 1. c. 8.

ſhall

ſhall be made to ſignify nothing, and to have no authority.

VII. 3. There is no general council that determined that a general council is infallible: no ſcripture hath recorded it, no tradition univerſal hath tranſmitted to us any ſuch propoſition; ſo that we muſt receive the authority at a lower rate, and upon a leſs probability than the things conſigned by that authority. And it is ſtrange that the decrees of councils ſhould be eſteemed authentick and infallible, and yet it is not infallibly certain, that the councils themſelves are infallible, becauſe the belief of the council's infallibility is not proved to us by any medium, but ſuch as may deceive us.

VIII. 4. But the beſt inſtance that councils are ſome and may all be deceived, is the contradiction of one council to another; for in that caſe both cannot be true, and which of them is true, muſt belong to another judgment, which is leſs than the ſolemnity of a general council; and the determination of this matter can be of no greater certainty after it is concluded, than when it was propounded as a queſtion, being it is to be determined by the ſame authority or by a leſs than itſelf. But for this allegation, we cannot want inſtances; the council of *Trent* allows picturing of God the father; the council of * *Nice* altogether diſallows it; the ſame † *Nicene* council, which was the ſeventh general, allows of picturing Chriſt in the form of a lamb; but the ſixth ſynod by no means will endure it, as *Caranza* affirms: the council of *Neocæſarea* confirmed by ‡ *Leo* IV. *diſt.* 20. *de libellis*, and approved by the firſt *Nicene* council as it is ſaid in the ſeventh ſeſſion of the council of *Florence*, forbids ſecond marriages

* Seſſ. 25. † Act. 2. ‡ Can. 82.

and impoſes penances on them that are married the ſecond time, forbidding prieſts to be preſent at ſuch marriage feaſts: beſides, that this is expreſsly againſt the doctrine of St. *Paul*, it is alſo againſt the doctrine of the council of * *Laodicea*, which took off ſuch penances, and pronounced ſecond marriages to be free and lawful: nothing is more diſcrepant than the third council of *Carthage* and the council of *Laodicea*, about aſſignation of the canon of ſcripture, and yet the ſixth general ſynod approves both: and I would fain know if all general councils are of the ſame mind with the fathers of the council of *Carthage*, who reckon into the canon five books of *Solomon*. I am ſure St. † *Auſtin* reckoned but three, and I think all Chriſtendom beſides are of the ſame opinion. And if we look into the title of the law *de Conciliis*, called *Concordantia diſcordantiarum*, we ſhall find inſtances enough to confirm that the decrees of ſome councils are contradictory to others, and that no wit can reconcile them: And whether they did or no, that they might diſagree, and former councils be corrected by later, was the belief of the doctors in thoſe ages in which the beſt and moſt famous councils were convened, as appears in that famous ſaying of St. *Auſtin* ſpeaking concerning the rebaptizing of hereticks; and how much the *Africans* were deceived in that queſtion, he anſwers the allegation of the biſhops letters, and thoſe national councils which confirmed St. ‡ *Cyprian*'s opinion, by ſaying that they were no final determination. For *Epiſcoporum literæ emendari poſſunt a conciliis nationalibus, Concilia nationalia a plenariis, ipſaque plenaria priora a poſterioribus emendari.* Not only the occaſion of the

* Cap. 1. † Lib. 17. de cul. Dei. cap. 20. ‡ Lib. 2. de bapt. Doaat. c. 3.

queſtion

queſtion being a matter not of fact, but of faith, as being inſtanced in the queſtion of rebaptizaton: but alſo the very fabrick and œconomy of the words, put by all the anſwers of thoſe men who think themſelves preſſed with the authority of St. *Auſtin.* For as national councils may correct the biſhops letters, and general councils may correct national, ſo the later general may correct the former, that is, have contrary and better decrees of manners, and better determinations in matters of faith. And from hence hath ariſen a queſtion whether is to be received the former or the later councils, in caſe they contradict each other. The former are nearer the fountains apoſtolical, the later are of greater conſideration; the firſt, have more authority, the later more reaſon; the firſt are more venerable, the later more inquiſitive and ſeeing. And now what rule ſhall we have to determine our beliefs, whether to authority, or reaſon, the reaſon and the authority both of them not being the higheſt in their kind, both of them being repudiable, and at moſt but probable? And here it is that this great uncertainty is ſuch as not to determine any body, but fit to ſerve every body; and it is ſport to ſee that *Bellarmine* will by all means have the council of * *Carthage* preferred before the council of *Laodicea*, becauſe it is later, and yet he prefers the ſecond *Nicene* council † before the council of *Frankfort*, becauſe it is elder: St. *Auſtin* would have the former generals to be mended by the latter; but ‡ *Iſidore* in *Gratian* ſays when councils do differ *ſtandum eſſe antiquioribus*, the elder muſt carry it: And indeed theſe probables are buſkins to ſerve every foot, and they are like *magnum & parvum*, they have

* Lib. 2. de Concil. cap. 8. §. reſpondeo in primis.
† Ibid. ſect. de Concilio autem. ‡ Diſt. 20. can. domino Sancto.

nothing of their own, all that they have is in compariſon of others; ſo theſe topicks have nothing of reſolute and dogmatical truth, but in relation to ſuch ends as an intereſted perſon hath a mind to ſerve upon them.

IX. 5. There are many councils corrupted, and many pretended and alledged, when there were no ſuch things, both which make the topick of the authority of councils to be little and inconſiderable: There is a council brought to light in the edition of councils by *Binius*, viz. *Sinueſſanum*, pretended to be kept in the year 303, but it was ſo private till then, that we find no mention of it in any ancient record: Neither *Euſebius*, nor *Ruffinus*, St. *Hierom*, nor *Socrates*, *Sozomen*, nor *Theodoret*, nor *Eutropius*, nor *Bede*, knew any thing of it, and the eldeſt allegation of it is by pope *Nicholas* I. in the ninth century. And he that ſhall conſider that 300 biſhops in the midſt of horrid perſecutions (for ſo then they were) are pretended to have convened, will need no greater argument to ſuſpect the impoſture; beſides, he that was the framer of the engine did not lay his ends together handſomely, for it is ſaid that the depoſition of *Marcellinus* by the ſynod was told to *Diocleſian*, when he was in the *Perſian* war, when as it is known before that time he had returned to *Rome*, and triumphed for his *Perſian* conqueſt, as *Euſebius* in his chronicle reports: And this is ſo plain that *Binius* and *Baronius* pretend the text to be corrupted, and to go to * mend it by ſuch an emendation, as is a plain contradiction to the ſenſe, and that ſo un-clerk-like, viz. by putting in two words and leaving out one, which whether it may be

* Pro [cum eſſet in bello Perſarum] legi volunt [eum reverſus eſſet é bello Perſarum] *Euſeb. Chronicon. vide Binium in notis ad Concil. Sinveſſanum. tom* 1. *Concil. & Baron. Annal. tom.* 3. A. D. 303. *num.* 107.

allowed

allowed them by any licence leſs than poetical let criticks judge. St. *Gregory* † ſaith that the *Conſtantinopolitans* had corrupted the ſynod of *Chalcedon*, and that he ſuſpected the ſame concerning the *Epheſine* council: And in the fifth ſynod there was a notorious prevarication, for there were falſe epiſtles of pope *Vigilius* and *Menna* the patriarch of *Conſtantinople* inſerted, and ſo they paſſed for authentick till they were diſcovered in the ſixth general ſynod, *Actions the* 12. *and* 14: And not only falſe decrees and actions may creep into the codes of councils; but ſometimes the authority of a learned man may abuſe the church with pretended decrees, of which there is no copy or ſhadow in the code itſelf: And thus *Thomas Aquinas* ſays ‡, that the epiſtle to the Hebrews was reckoned in the canon by the *Nicene* council, no ſhadow of which appears in thoſe copies we now have of it; and this pretence and the reputation of the man prevailed ſo far with *Melchior Canus* the learned biſhop of *Canaries*, that he believed it upon this ground, *Vir ſanctus rem adeo gravem non aſtrueret, niſi compertum habuiſſet*; and there are many things which have prevailed upon leſs reaſon and a more ſlight authority. And that very council of *Nice*, hath not only been pretended by *Aquinas*, but very much abuſed by others, and its authority and great reputation hath made it more liable to the fraud and pretences of idle people: For whereas the *Nicene* fathers made but twenty canons, for ſo many and no more were received by [a] *Cecilian* of *Carthage*, who was at *Nice* in the council; by St. [b] *Auſtin*, and 200 *African* biſhops with him, by St. [c] *Cyrill* of *Alexandria*, by [d] *Atti-*

† L. 5. Ep. 14. ad Narſem. ‡ Comment. in Hebr.
[a] Con. Carthag. VI. cap. 9. [b] Con. African. [c] Ibid. c. 102, & c. 133. [d] Lib. 1. Eccl. Hiſt, c. 6.

cus

cus of *Conſtantinople*, by *Ruffinus*, [e] *Iſidore* and *Theodoret*, as [f] *Baronius* witneſſes, yet there are fourſcore lately found out in an *Arabian* M. S. and publiſhed in Latin by *Turrian* and *Alfonſus* of *Piſa* jeſuits ſurely, and like to be maſters of the mint. And not only the canons, but the very acts of the *Nicene* council are falſe and ſpurious and are ſo confeſſed by *Baronius*; though how he and [g] *Lindanus* will be reconciled upon the point, I neither know well, nor much care. Now if one council be corrupted, we ſee by the inſtance of St. *Gregory*, that another may be ſuſpected and ſo all; becauſe he found the council of *Chalcedon* corrupted, he ſuſpected alſo the *Epheſine*, and another might have ſuſpected more, for the *Nicene* was tampered foully with, and ſo three of the four generals were ſullied and made ſuſpicious, and therefore we could not be ſecure of any; if falſe acts be inſerted in one council, who can truſt the actions of any, unleſs he had the keeping the records himſelf, or durſt ſwear for the regiſter: And if a very learned man (as *Thomas Aquinas* was,) did either wilfully deceive us, or was himſelf ignorantly abuſed in allegation of a canon which was not, it is but a very fallible topick at the beſt, and the moſt holy man that is, may be abuſed himſelf, and the wiſeſt may deceive others.

X. 6. And laſtly, To all this and to the former inſtances, by way of corollary, I add ſome more particulars in which it is notorious that councils general, and national, that is, ſuch as were either general by original, or by adoption into the canon of the catholick church did err, and were actually deceived. The firſt council of *Toledo* admits

[e] In princ. Con. de Synod. Princ. [f] Baronius, tom. 3. A. D. 325. n. 156. tom. 3. ad A. D. 325. n. 62, 63.
[g] Panopl. l. 2. c. 6.

to

to the communion him that hath a concubine, ſo he have no wife beſides, and this council is approved by pope *Leo* in the 92d epiſtle to *Ruſticus* biſhop of *Narbona*: *Gratian* ſays that the council means by a concubine, a wife married *ſine dote & ſolennitate*; but this is daubing with untempered mortar. For though it was a cuſtom among the Jews to diſtinguiſh wives from their concubines by dowry and legal ſolennities, yet the chriſtian diſtinguiſhed them no otherwiſe, than as lawful and unlawful, than as chaſtity and fornication: And beſides, if by a concubine is meant a lawful wife without a dowry, to what purpoſe ſhould the council make a law that ſuch a one might be admitted to the communion? for I ſuppoſe it was never thought to be a law of chriſtianity, that a man ſhould have a portion with his wife, nor he that married a poor virgin ſhould deſerve to be excommunicate. So that *Gratian* and his followers are preſt ſo with this canon, that to avoid the impiety of it, they expound it to a ſignification without ſenſe or purpoſe. But the buſineſs then was, that adultery was ſo publick and notorious a practice that the council did chuſe rather to endure ſimple fornication, that by ſuch permiſſion of a leſs, they might ſlacken the publick cuſtom of a greater, juſt as at *Rome* they permit ſtews to prevent unnatural ſins; but that by a publick ſanction fornicators, habitually and notoriouſly ſuch, ſhould be admitted to the holy communion was an act of prieſts, ſo unfit for prieſts, that no excuſe can make it white or clean. The council of *Wormes* * does authorize a ſuperſtitious cuſtom at that time too much uſed, of diſcovering ſtolen goods by the holy ſacrament, which *Aquinas* † juſtly condemns for ſuperſtition. The

‡ Diſt. 34. can. omnibus. * Cap. 3. † Part. 3. q. 80. a 6. ad 3 m.

ſixth

ſixth ſynod * ſeparates perſons lawfully married upon an accuſation of hereſy: The Roman council under † pope *Nicholas* II. defined that not only the ſacrament of Chriſt's body, but the very body itſelf of our bleſſed Saviour is handled and broke by the hands of the prieſt, and chewed by the teeth of the communicants, which is a manifeſt error derogatory from the truth of Chriſt's beatifical reſurrection, and glorification in the heavens, and diſavowed by the church of *Rome* itſelf: But *Bellarmine* § who anſwers all the arguments in the world, whether it be poſſible or not poſſible, would fain make the matter fair, and the decree tolerable: for, ſays he, the decree means that the body is broken not in itſelf but in the ſign, and yet the decree ſays that not only the ſacrament (which if any thing be, is certainly the ſign) but the very body itſelf is broken and champed with hands and teeth reſpectively; which indeed was nothing but a plain over-acting the article in contradiction to *Berengarius*. And the anſwer of *Bellarmine* is not ſenſe; for he denies that the body itſelf is broken in itſelf (that was the error we charged upon the Roman ſynod) and the ſign abſtracting from the body is not broken, (for that was the opinion that council condemned in *Berengarius*) but ſays *Bellarmine*, the body in the ſign: What's that? for neither the ſign, nor the body, nor both together are broken: For if either of them diſtinctly, they either ruſh upon the error which the Roman ſynod condemned in *Berengarius*, or upon that which they would fain excuſe in pope *Nicholas*; but if both are broken then 'tis true to affirm it of either, and then the council is blaſphe-

* Can. 72. † Can. ego Berengar. de conſecrat. diſt. 2. § Lib. 2. c. 8. de Concil.

mou

mous in ſaying that Chriſt's glorified body is paſſible and fringible by natural manducation: So that it is and it is not, it is not this way, and yet it is no way elſe, but it is ſome way, and they know not how, and the council ſpoke blaſphemy, but it muſt be made innocent; and therefore, it was requiſite a cloud of a diſtinction ſhould be raiſed, that the unwary reader might be amuſed, and the decree ſcape untouched; but the truth is, they that undertake to juſtify all that other men ſay, muſt be more ſubtle than they who ſaid it, and muſt uſe ſuch diſtinctions which poſſibly the firſt authors did not underſtand. But I will multiply no more inſtances, for what inſtance ſoever I ſhall bring, ſome or other will be anſwering it, which thing is ſo far from ſatisfying me in the particulars, that it encreaſes the difficulty in the general, and ſatisfies me in my firſt belief: For * if no decrees of councils can make againſt them though they ſeem never ſo plain againſt them, then let others be allowed the ſame liberty, (and there is all the reaſon in the world they ſhould) and no decree ſhall conclude againſt any doctrine, that they have already entertained; and by this means the church is no fitter inſtrument to decree controverſies, than the ſcripture itſelf, there being as much obſcurity and diſputing in the ſenſe, and the manner, and the degree, and the competency, and the obligation of the decree of a council, as of a place of ſcripture. And what are we the nearer for a decree, if any ſophiſter ſhall think his eluſion enough to conteſt againſt the authority of a council? yet this they do, who pretend higheſt for their authority, which conſi-

* Illa demum eis videntur edicta & Concilia, quæ in rem ſuam faciunt; reliqua non pluris æſtimant quam conventum muliercularum in textrina vel thermis. *Ludo. Vives. in ſcholiis* lib. 20. *Aug. de Civit. Dei.* c. 26.

deration

deration or ſome like it might poſſibly make *Gratian* prefer St. *Hierom*'s ſingle teſtimony before a whole council, becauſe he had ſcripture of his ſide; which ſays, that the authority of councils is not ἀυτοπιστος, and that councils may poſſibly recede from their rule, from ſcripture; and in that caſe, a ſingle perſon proceeding according to rule is a better argument; which indeed was the ſaying of *Panormitan*, *in concernentibus fidem etiam dictum unius privâti eſſet dicto Papæ aut totius concilii præferendum, ſi ille moveretur melioribus argumentis.*

XI. I end this diſcourſe with repreſenting the words of *Gregory Nazianzen* in his epiſtle * to *Procopius*; *ego ſi vera ſcribere oportet, ita animo affectus ſum, ut omnia epiſcoporum concilia fugiam, quoniam nullius concilii finem lætum fauſtumque vidi, nec quod depulſionem malorum potius quam acceſſionem & incrementum habuerit*: But I will not be ſo ſevere and dogmatical againſt them: For I believe many councils to have been called with ſufficient authority, to have been managed with ſingular piety and prudence, and to have been finiſhed with admirable ſucceſs and truth. And where we find ſuch councils, he that will not with all veneration believe their decrees, and receive their ſanctions, underſtands not that great duty he owes to them who have the care of our ſouls, whoſe *faith we are bound to follow* † (ſaith St. *Paul*) that is ſo long as they follow Chriſt, and certainly many councils have done ſo: But this was then when the publick intereſt of Chriſtendom was better conſerved in determining a true article, than in finding a diſcreet temper, or a wiſe expedient to ſa-

‡ 36. q. 2. c. placuit.

‖ Part. 1. de election. Et Elect. poteſt. cap. ſigni ſicaſti.

* Athanaſ. lib. de Synod. Fruſtra igitur circumcurſitantes prætexunt ob fidem ſe Synodos poſtulare, cum ſit Divina Sriptura omnibus potentior.

† Heb. 13. 7.

tisfy

tisfy diſagreeing perſons; (as the fathers at *Trent* did, and the *Lutherans* and *Calviniſts* did at *Sendomir* in *Polonia*; and the *Sublapſarians* and *Supralapſarians* did at *Dort:*) It was in ages when the ſum of religion did not conſiſt in maintaining the *Grandezza* of the papacy; where there was no order of men with a fourth vow upon them to advance St. *Peter*'s chair; when there was no man nor any company of men, that eſteemed themſelves infallible, and therefore they ſearched for truth as if they meant to find it, and would believe it if they could ſee it proved, not reſolved to prove it becauſe they had upon chance or intereſt believed it; then they had rather have ſpoken a truth, than upheld their reputation, but only in order to truth. This was done ſometimes, and when it was done, God's Spirit never failed them, but gave them ſuch aſſiſtances as were ſufficient to that good end for which they were aſſembled, and did implore his aid: And therefore it is that the four general councils ſo called by way of eminency, have gained ſo great a reputation above all others, not becauſe they had a better promiſe, or more ſpecial aſſiſtances, but becauſe they had proceeded better according to the rule, with leſs faction, without ambition and temporal ends.

XII. And yet thoſe very aſſemblies of biſhops had no authority by their decrees to make a divine faith, or to conſtitute new objects of neceſſary credence; they made nothing true that was not ſo before, and therefore they are to be apprehended in the nature of excellent guides, and whoſe decrees are moſt certainly to determine all thoſe who have no argument to the contrary, of greater force and efficacy than the authority or reaſons of the council. And there is a duty owing to every pariſh prieſt, and to every dioceſan biſhop; theſe are appointed over us and to anſwer for our ſouls, and

and are therefore morally to guide us as reaſonable creatures are to be guided, that is, by reaſon and diſcourſe: For in things of judgment and underſtanding, they are but in form next above beaſts, who are to be ruled by the imperiouſneſs and abſoluteneſs of authority, unleſs the authority be divine, that is, infallible. Now then in a juſter height, but ſtill in its true proportion, aſſemblies of biſhops are to guide us with a higher authority, becauſe in reaſon it is ſuppoſed they will do it better, with more argument and certainty, and with decrees, which have the advantage, by being the reſults of many diſcourſes of very wiſe and good men: But that the authority of general councils, was never eſteemed abſolute, infallible, and unlimited, appears in this, that before they were obliging, it was neceſſary that each particular church reſpectively ſhould accept them, *Concurrente univerſali totius eccleſiæ conſenſu, &c. in declaratione veritatum quæ credenda ſunt, &c.* That is the way of making the decrees of councils become authentick, and be turned into a law, as *Gerſon* obſerves; and till they did, their decrees were but a dead letter (and therefore it is that theſe later Popes have ſo laboured, that the council of *Trent* ſhould be received in *France*; and *Carolus Molineus* a great lawyer, and of the Roman communion, diſputed * againſt the reception,) and this is a known condition in the canon law, but it proves plainly that the decrees of councils have their authority from the voluntary ſubmiſſion of the particular churches, not from the prime ſanction and conſtitution of the council. And there is great reaſon it ſhould; for as

† Vid. St. *Auguſt.* 1. l. c. 18. de bapt. contr. Donat.

* So did the third eſtate of *France* in the convention of the three eſtates under *Lewis* XIIIth earneſtly contend againſt it.

the

the repreſentative body of the church derives all power from the diffuſive body which is repreſented, ſo it reſolves into it, and though it may have all the legal power, yet it hath not all the natural; for more able men may be unſent, than ſent; and they who are ſent may be wrought upon by ſtratagem, which cannot happen to the whole diffuſive church; it is therefore moſt fit that ſince the legal power, that is, the external was paſſed over to the body repreſentative, yet the efficacy of it, and the internal ſhould ſo ſtill remain in the diffuſive, as to have power to conſider whether their repreſentatives did their duty yea or no; and ſo to proceed accordingly: For unleſs it be in matters of juſtice, in which the intereſt of a third perſon is concerned, no man will or can be ſuppoſed to paſs away all power from himſelf of doing himſelf right, in matters perſonal, proper, and of ſo high concernment: It is moſt unnatural and unreaſonable. But beſides, that they are excellent inſtruments of peace, the beſt human judicatories in the world, rare ſermons for the determining a point in controverſy, and the greateſt probability from human authority, beſides theſe advantages (I ſay) I know nothing greater that general councils can pretend to with reaſon and argument ſufficient to ſatisfy any wiſe man: And as there was never any council ſo general, but it might have been more general; for in reſpect of the whole church, even *Nice* itſelf was but a ſmall aſſembly; ſo there is no decree ſo well conſtituted, but it may be proved by an argument higher than the authority of the council: And therefore general councils, and national, and provincial and dioceſan in their ſeveral degrees, are excellent guides for the prophets and directions and inſtructions for their propheſyings, but not of weight and authority to reſtrain their liberty ſo wholly, but that

they may diſſent when they ſee a reaſon ſtrong enough to perſuade them, as to be willing upon the confidence of that reaſon and their own ſincerity, to anſwer to God for ſuch their modeſty, and peaceable, but (as they believe) their neceſſary diſagreeing.

SECT. VII.

Of the fallibility of the Pope, and the uncertainty of his expounding ſcripture, and reſolving queſtions.

I. BUT ſince the queſtion between the Council and the Pope grew high, there have not wanted abettors ſo confident on the Pope's behalf, as to believe general councils to be nothing but pomps and ſolennities of the catholick church, and that all the authority of determining controverſies is formally and effectually in the Pope. And therefore to appeal from the pope to a future council is a hereſy, yea, and treaſon too ſaid Pope *Pius* II*. and therefore it concerns us now to be wiſe and wary. But before I proceed, I muſt needs remember that † Pope *Pius* II. while he was the wiſe and learned *Æneas Sylvius*, was very confident for the pre-eminence of a council, and gave a merry reaſon why more clerks were for the popes than the council, though the truth was on the other ſide, even becauſe the Pope gives biſhopricks and abbeys, but councils give none; and yet as ſoon as he was made Pope, as if he had been inſpired, his eyes were open to ſee

* Epiſt. ad Norimberg.

† Patrum & avorum noſtrorum tempore pauci audebant dicere Papam eſſe ſupra Concilium. *l. 1. de geſtis Concil. Baſil.*

the great privileges of St. *Peter*'s chair, which before he could not ſee, being amuſed with the truth, or elſe with the reputation of a general council. But however, there are many who hope to make it good, that the Pope is the univerſal and the infallible doctor, that he breathes decrees as oracles, that to diſſent from any of his cathedral determinations is abſolute hereſy, the rule of faith being nothing elſe but conformity to the chair of *Peter*. So that here we have met a reſtraint of prophecy indeed; but yet to make amends, I hope we ſhall have an infallible guide, and when a man is in heaven, he will never complain that his choice is taken from him, and that he is confined to love and to admire, ſince his love and his admiration is fixed, upon that which makes him happy, even upon God himſelf. And in the church of *Rome* there is in a lower degree, but in a true proportion, as little cauſe to be troubled, that we are confined to believe juſt ſo, and no choice left us for our underſtandings to diſcover, or our wills to chuſe, becauſe though we be limited, yet we are pointed out where we ought to reſt, we are confined to our center, and there where our underſtandings will be ſatisfied, and therefore will be quiet, and where after all our ſtrivings, ſtudies and endeavours we deſire to come, that is, to truth, for there we are ſecured to find it, becauſe we have a guide that is infallible: If this prove true, we are well enough. But if it be falſe or uncertain, it were better we had ſtill kept our liberty, than be cozened out of it with gay pretences. This then we muſt conſider.

II. And here we ſhall be oppreſſed with a cloud of witneſſes: For what more plain than the commiſſion given to *Peter*? *Thou art* Peter, *and upon this Rock will I build my church.* And *to*

thee will I give the keys. And again, *for thee have I prayed that thy faith fail not; but thou when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren*; and again, *If thou loveſt me, feed my ſheep*: now nothing of this being ſpoken to any other of the apoſtles, by one of theſe places St. *Peter* muſt needs be appointed foundation or head of the church, and by conſequence he is to rule and govern all. By ſome other of theſe places he is made the ſupreme paſtor, and he is to teach and determine all, and enabled with an infallible power ſo to do: and in a right underſtanding of theſe authorities, the fathers ſpeak great things of the chair of *Peter*; for we are as much bound to believe that all this was ſpoken to *Peter*'s ſucceſſors, as to his perſon; that muſt by all means be ſuppoſed, and ſo did the old doctors, who had as much certainty of it as we have, and no more; but yet let us hear what they have ſaid, * *To this church by reaſon of its more powerful principality, it is neceſſary all churches round about ſhould convene:..... In this, tradition apoſtolical always was obſerved, and therefore to communicate with this biſhop with this † church, was to be in communion with the church catholick:..... ‡ To this church error or perfidiouſneſs cannot have acceſs.* ..... § *Againſt this ſee the gates of hell cannot prevail:..... ** For we know this church to be built upon a rock:..... And whoever eats the lamb not within this houſe, is prophane; he that is not in the ark of* Noah *periſhes in the inundation of waters. He that gathers not with this biſhop, he ſcatters; and he that belongeth not to Chriſt, muſt needs belong to Antichriſt.* And that is his final ſentence: But if

* Irenæ. contra. hæreſ. l. 3. c. 3.

† Ambr. de obitu Salyri, & l. 1. Ep. 4. ad Imp. Cyprian. Ep. 52. ‡ Cypr. Ep. 55. ad Cornel.

§ St. Auſtin. in Pſal. contra. partem. Donat.

** Hieron. Ep. 57. ad Damaſum.

you

you would have all this proved by an infallible argument, * *Optatus* of *Milevis* in *Africa* ſupplies it to us from the very name of *Peter*: For therefore Chriſt gave him the cognomination of *Cephas* ἀπο τῆς κεφαλῆς, to ſhew that St. *Peter* was the viſible head of the catholick church. *Dignum patella operculum!* This long harangue muſt needs be full of tragedy to all them who take liberty to themſelves to follow ſcripture and their beſt guides, if it happens in that liberty that they depart from the perſuaſions or the communion of *Rome*: But indeed, if with the peace of the biſhops of *Rome* I may ſay it, this ſcene is the moſt unhandſomely laid, and the worſt carried of any of thoſe pretences that have lately abuſed Chriſtendom.

III. 1. Againſt the allegations of ſcripture, I ſhall lay no greater prejudice than this, that if a perſon diſintereſted ſhould ſee them, and conſider what the products of them might poſſibly be, the laſt thing that he would think of, would be how that any of theſe places ſhould ſerve the ends or pretences of the church of *Rome*: For to inſtance in one of the particulars, that man had need have a ſtrong fancy who imagines, that becauſe Chriſt prayed for St. *Peter*, that (being he had deſigned him to be one of thoſe upon whoſe preaching and doctrine he did mean to conſtitute a church) *that his faith might not fail*, (for it was neceſſary that no bitterneſs or ſtopping ſhould be in one of the firſt ſprings, leſt the current be either ſpoiled or obſtructed) that therefore the faith of Pope *Alexander* VI. or *Gregory*, or *Clement* 1500 years after, ſhould be preſerved by virtue of that prayer, which the form of words, the time, the occaſion, the manner of the addreſs, the effect itſelf, and

* L. 2. contra. Parmenian.

all the circumſtances of the action and perſon did determine to be perſonal. And when it was more than perſonal, St. *Peter* did not repreſent his ſucceſſors at * *Rome*, but the whole catholick church, ſays *Aquinas* and the divines of the univerſity of *Paris*; † *Volunt enim pro ſola Eccleſia eſſe oratum*, ſays *Bellarmine* of them, and the gloſs upon the canon law plainly denies the effect of this prayer at all to appertain to the Pope: ‡ *Quære de qua Eccleſia intelligas quod hic dicitur quod non poſſit errare, ſi de ipſo Papa qui eccleſia dicitur? ſed certum eſt quod Papæ errare poteſt:..... Reſpondeo ipſa congregatio fidelium hic dicitur Eccleſia, & talis Eccleſia non poteſt non eſſe, nam ipſe Dominus erat pro Eccleſia, et voluntate labiorum ſuorum non fraudabitur.* But there is a little danger in this argument when we well conſider it; but it is likely to redound on the head of them whoſe turns it ſhould ſerve: for it may be remembered that for all this prayer of Chriſt for St. *Peter*, the good man fell foully, and denied his maſter ſhamefully: And ſhall Chriſt's prayer be of greater efficacy for his ſucceſſors, for whom it was made but indirectly and by conſequence, than for himſelf, for whom it was directly and in the firſt intention? And if not, then for all this argument, the Popes may deny Chriſt as well as their cheif and deceſſor *Peter*. But it would not be forgotten, how the Roman doctors will by no means allow that St. *Peter* was then the chief biſhop or pope, when he denied his maſter. But then much leſs was he choſen chief biſhop, when the prayer was made for him, becauſe the prayer was made before his fall; that is, before that time in which it is con-

* 22 æ. q 2. a. 6. ar. 6. ad. 3 m. † L. 4. de Roman. Pont. c. 3. ‡ Cauſ. 21. cap. â recta. q. 1. § 29. diſt. Anaſtatius. 60. diſt. ſi Papa.

feſſed,

feſſed, he was not as yet made Pope: And how then the whole ſucceſſion of the papacy ſhould be intitled to it, paſſes the length of my hand to ſpan. But then alſo if it be ſuppoſed and allowed that theſe words ſhall intail infallibility upon the chair of *Rome*, why ſhall not alſo all the apoſtolical ſees be infallible as well as *Rome*? why ſhall not *Conſtantinople* or *Byzantium* where St. *Andrew* ſat? why ſhall not *Epheſus* where St. *John* ſat? or *Jeruſalem* where St. *James* ſat? for Chriſt prayed for them all, *ut Pater ſanctificaret eos ſua veritate.* John 17.

IV. 2. For [*tibi dabo claves,*] was it perſonal or not? If it were, then the biſhops of *Rome* have nothing to do with it: If it were not, then by what argument will it be made evident that St. *Peter*, in the promiſe, repreſented only his ſucceſſors, and not the whole college of apoſtles, and the whole hierarchy? for if St. *Peter* was chief of the apoſtles, and head of the church, he might fair enough be the repreſentative of the whole college, and receive it in their right as well as his own; which alſo is certain that it was ſo, for the ſame promiſe of binding and looſing, (which certainly was all that the keys were given for) was made afterwards to all the apoſtles, *Mat.* 18. and the power of remitting and retaining which in reaſon and according to the ſtile of the church is the ſame thing in other words, was actually given to all the apoſtles, and unleſs that was the performing the firſt and ſecond promiſe, we find it not recorded in ſcripture how or when, or whether yet or no, the promiſe be performed: That promiſe I ſay which did not pertain to *Peter* principally and by origination, and to the reſt by communication, ſociety and adherence; but that promiſe which was made to *Peter* firſt, but not for himſelf, but for all the college, and for

all their ſucceſſors, and then made the ſecond time to them all, without repreſentation, but in diffuſion, and performed to all alike in preſence, except St. *Thomas*. And if he went to St. *Peter* to derive it from him I know not; I find no record for that, but that Chriſt conveyed the promiſe to him by the ſame commiſſion, the church yet never doubted, nor had ſhe any reaſon. But this matter is too notorious: I ſay no more to it, but repeat the words and argument of * St. *Auſtin*, *Si hoc Petro tantum dictum eſt, non facit hoc Eccleſia*: If the keys were only given and ſo promiſed to St. *Peter*, that the church hath not the keys, then the church can neither bind nor looſe, remit nor retain, which God forbid; if any man ſhould endeavour to anſwer this argument, I leave him and St. *Auſtin* to conteſt it.

V. 3. For *paſce oves*, there is little in that allegation, beſides the boldneſs of the objectors; for were not all the apoſtles bound to feed Chriſt's ſheep? had they not all the commiſſion from Chriſt, and Chriſt's ſpirit immediately? St. *Paul* had certainly; did not St. *Peter* himſelf ſay to all the biſhops of *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Aſia*, and *Bithinia*, that they ſhould feed the flock of God, and the great biſhop and ſhepherd ſhould give them an immarceſcible crown; plainly implying, that from whence they derived their authority, from him they were ſure of a reward: In purſuance of which † St. *Cyprian* laid his argument upon this baſis, *Nam cum ſtatutum ſit omnibus nobis &c. & ſingulis paſtoribus portio gregis, &c.* Did not St. *Paul* call to the biſhops of *Epheſus* to feed the flock of God, of which the holy Ghoſt had made them biſhops or overſeers?

* Tra. 50. in Joann. Lib. 1. Epiſt. 3.

and

and that this very commiſſion was ſpoken to *Peter* not in a perſonal, but a publick capacity, and in him ſpoke to all the apoſtles, we ſee atteſted by St. *Auſtin, and St. *Ambroſe*, and generally by all antiquity; and it ſo concerned even every prieſt that *Damaſus* was willing enough to have St. *Hierom* explicate many queſtions for him. And *Liberius* writes an epiſtle to *Athanaſius*, with much modeſty requiring his advice in a queſtion of faith, ἵνα κἀγω πεπροιδως ὡ ἀδιακριτως, περι ὡν ἀξιοις κελευειν μοι. † That I alſo may be perſuaded without all doubting, of thoſe things which you ſhall be pleaſed to command me. Now *Liberius* needed not to have troubled himſelf to have writ into the eaſt to *Athanaſius*; for if he had but ſeated himſelf in his chair, and made the dictate, the reſult of his pen and ink would certainly have taught him and all the church; but that the good Pope was ignorant that either *paſce oves* was his own charter, and prerogative, or that any other words of ſcripture had made him to be infallible, or if he was not ignorant of it, he did very ill to compliment himſelf out of it. So did all thoſe biſhops of *Rome* who in that troubleſome and unprofitable queſtion of Eaſter, being unſatisfied in the ſupputation of the *Egyptians*, and the definitions of the mathematical biſhops of *Alexandria*, did yet require and intreat ‡ St. *Ambroſe* to tell them his opinion, as he himſelf witneſſes; if *paſce oves* belongs only to the Pope by primary title, in theſe caſes the ſheep came to feed the ſhepherd, which though it was well enough in the thing, is very ill for the pretentions of the Roman biſhops; and if we conſider how little many of the Popes have done towards

* De agone Chriſti. c. 30. † Epiſt. ad Athan. apud Athanaſ. tom. 1. pag. 42, Pariſ. ‡ Lib. 10. Epiſt. 83.

feeding

feeding the ſheep of chriſt, we ſhall hardly determine which is the greater prevarication, that the Pope ſhould claim the whole commiſſion to be granted to him, or that the execution of the commiſſion ſhould be wholly paſſed over to others; and it may be there is a myſtery in it, that ſince St. *Peter* ſent a biſhop with his ſtaff to raiſe up a diſciple of his from the dead, who was afterward Biſhop of *Triers*, the popes of *Rome* never wear a paſtoral ſtaff except it be in that dioceſe (ſays *Aquinas**) for great reaſon that he who does not do the office, ſhould not bear the ſymbol; but a man would think that the Pope's maſter of the ceremonies was ill adviſed, not to aſſign a paſtoral ſtaff to him, who pretends the commiſſion of *paſce oves* to belong to him by prime right and origination. But this is not a buſineſs to be merry in.

VI. But the great ſupport is expected from *Tu es Petrus, & ſuper hanc Petram ædificabo eccleſiam, &c.* Now there being ſo great difference in the expoſition of theſe words, by perſons diſintereſted, who, if any, might be allowed to judge in this queſtion, it is certain that neither one ſenſe nor other can be obtruded for an article of faith, much leſs as a catholicon inſtead of all, by conſtituting an authority which ſhould guide us in all faith, and determine us in all queſtions: For if the church was not built upon the perſon of *Peter*, then his ſucceſſors can challenge nothing from this inſtance; now that it was the confeſſion of *Peter* upon which the church was to rely for ever, we have witneſſes very credible, † St. *Ignatius*, ‡ St. *Baſil*, § St. *Hilary*, ‖ St.

* M. 4. Sent. diſt. 24. † Ad Philadelph. ‡ Selcuc. orat. 25. § Lib. 6. de Trinit. ‖ De Trinitate adverſ. Judæos.

Gregory

Gregory Nyſſen, * St. *Gregory* the Great, † St. *Auſtin*, ‡ St. *Cyrill* of *Alexandria*, || *Iſidore Peluſiot*, and very many more. And although all theſe witneſſes concurring cannot make a propoſition to be true, yet they are ſufficient witneſſes that it was not the univerſal belief of Chriſtendom, that the church was built upon St. *Peter*'s perſon. Cardinal *Perron* hath a fine fancy to elude this variety of expoſition, and the conſequents of it; for (ſaith he) theſe expoſitions are not contrary or excluſive of each other, but incluſive and conſequent to each other: for the church is founded caſually upon the confeſſion of St. *Peter*, formally upon the miniſtry of his perſon, and this was a reward or a conſequent of the former: So that theſe expoſitions are both true, but they are conjoined as mediate and immediate, direct and collateral, literal and moral, original and perpetual, acceſſory and temporal, the one conſigned at the beginning, the other introduced upon occaſion: for before the ſpring of the *Arrian* hereſy, the fathers expounded theſe words of the perſon of *Peter*; but after the *Arrians* troubled them, the fathers finding great authority, and *Energy* in this confeſſion of *Peter*, for the eſtabliſhment of the natural filiation of the ſon of God, to advance the reputation of theſe words and the force of the argument, gave themſelves licence to expound theſe words to the preſent advantage, and to make the confeſſion of *Peter* to be the foundation of the church, that if the *Arrians* ſhould encounter this authority, they might with more prejudice to their perſons declaim againſt their cauſe by ſaying they overthrew the foundation of the church. Beſides that this anſwer does much diſhonour the reputation of the fathers

* L. 3. Ep. 33. † In 1. Eph. Joann. tr. 10. ‡ De Trinit. lib. 4. || Lib. 1, Eph. 235.

integrity,

integrity, and makes their interpretations leſs credible, as being made not of knowledge or reaſon, but of neceſſity and to ſerve a preſent turn, it is alſo falſe: For **Ignatius* expounds it in a ſpiritual ſenſe, which alſo the liturgy attributed to St. *James* calls ἐπι πετραν της πιστεως; And *Origen* expounds it myſtically to a third purpoſe, but excluſively to this: And all theſe were before the *Arrian* controverſy. But if it be lawful to make ſuch unproved obſervations, it would have been to better purpoſe, and more reaſon to have obſerved it thus: the Fathers, ſo long as the biſhop of *Rome* kept himſelf to the limits preſcribed him by Chriſt, and indulged to him by the conſtitution or conceſſion of the church, were unwary and apt to expound this place of the perſon of *Peter*; but when the church began to enlarge her phylacteries by the favour of princes, and the ſunſhine of a proſperous fortune, and the Pope by the advantage of the imperial ſeat, and other accidents, began to invade upon the other biſhops and patriarchs, then that he might have no colour from ſcripture for ſuch new pretenſions, they did moſt generally turn the ſtream of their expoſitions from the perſon to the confeſſion of *Peter*, and declared that to be the foundation of the church. And thus I have requited fancy with fancy; but for the main point, that theſe two expoſitions are inclusive of each other, I find no warrant; for though they may conſiſt together well enough, if Chriſt had ſo intended them; yet unleſs it could be ſhewn by ſome circumſtance of the text, or ſome other extrinſecal argument that they muſt be ſo, and that both ſenſes were actually intended, it is but *gratis dictum* and a begging of the queſtion, to ſay that they are ſo, and the fancy ſo

* Epiſt. ad Philadeph. in c. 16. Mat. tract. 1.

new,

new, that when St. *Auſtin* had expounded this place of the perſon of *Peter*, he reviews it again, and in his retractations leaves every man to his liberty, which to take; as having nothing certain in this article: which had been altogether needleſs, if he had believed them to be incluſively in each other; neither of them had need to have been retracted, both were alike true, both of them might have been believed; but I ſaid the fancy was new, and I had reaſon; for it was ſo unknown till yeſterday, that even the late writers of his own ſide expound the words of the confeſſion of St. *Peter* excluſively to his perſon or any thing elſe, as is to be ſeen in * *Marſilius*, † *Petrus de Aliaco* and the gloſs upon *Diſt.* 19. *can. ita Dominus*, § *ut ſupra*, which alſo was the interpreta- of *Phavorinus Camers* their own biſhop, from whom they learnt the reſemblance of the word Πετρος, and πετρα, of which they have made ſo many gay diſcourſes, πετρα σεμια ἐστι πιστις ἀβράαγης ἡμων Ιησους Χριστος εις οἰκοδομην ψυχης ἐν τω ἡγεμονικω θεμελιω προθεμελιωμενη.

VII. 5. But upon condition I may have leave at another time to recede from ſo great and numerous teſtimony of fathers, I am willing to believe, that it was not the Confeſſion of St. *Peter*, but his Perſon upon which Chriſt ſaid he would build his church, or that theſe expoſitions are conſiſtent with and conſequent to each other, that this confeſſion was the objective foundation of faith, and Chriſt and his apoſtles the ſubjective, Chriſt principally, and St. *Peter* inſtrumentally; and yet I underſtand not any advantage will hence accrue to the ſee of *Rome*: For upon St. *Peter*

* Defenſ. pacis part. 2. c. 28. † Recommend. ſacra. Script.

it

it was built, but not alone, for it *was upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone*; and when St. *Paul* reckoned the oeconomy of hierarchy, he reckons not *Peter* firſt, and then the apoſtles. But firſt apoſtles, ſecondarily prophets, &c. And whatſoever is firſt, either is before all things elſe, or at leaſt nothing is before it: So that at leaſt St. *Peter* is not before all the reſt of the apoſtles, which alſo St. *Paul* expreſsly avers, *I am in nothing inferior to the very chiefeſt of the apoſtles*, no not in the very being a rock and a foundation; and it was of the church of *Epheſus*, that St. *Paul* ſaid in particular it was *columna et firmamentum veritatis*, that church was, not excluding others, for they alſo were as much as ſhe; for ſo we keep cloſe and be united to the corner ſtone, although ſome be maſter builders*, yet all may build, and we have known whole nations converted by laymen and women, who have been builders ſo far as to bring them to the corner ſtone.

VIII. 6. But ſuppoſe all theſe things concern St. *Peter* in all the capacities can be with any colour pretended, yet what have the biſhops of *Rome* to do with this? for how will it appear that theſe promiſes and commiſſions did relate to him as a particular biſhop, and not as a publick apoſtle? ſince this later is ſo much the more likely, becauſe the great pretence of all ſeems in reaſon more proportionable to the founding of a church, than its continuance: and yet if they did relate to him as a particular biſhop (which yet is a further degree of improbability, removed further from certainty) yet why ſhall St. *Clement* or *Linus* rather ſucceed in this great office of

* Vide Socrat. lib. 1. cap. 19. 20. Sozom. lib. 2. cap. 14. Niceph. lib. 14. cap. 40.

headſhip

headſhip, than St. *John* or any of the apoſtles that ſurvived *Peter*; it is no way likely a private perſon ſhould ſkip over the head of an apoſtle; or why ſhall his ſucceſſors at *Rome* more enjoy the benefit of it than his ſucceſſors at *Antioch*, ſince that he was at *Antioch* and preached there, we have a divine authority, but that he did ſo at *Rome*, at moſt we have but a human; and if it be replied that becauſe he died at *Rome*, it was argument enough that there his ſucceſſors were to inherit his privilege, this beſides that at moſt it is but one little degree of probability, and ſo not of ſtrength ſufficient to ſupport an article of faith; it makes that the great divine right of *Rome*, and the apoſtolical precedency was ſo contingent and fallible as to depend upon the decree of *Nero*; and if he had ſent him to *Antioch* there to have ſuffered martyrdom, the biſhops of that town had been heads of the catholick church. And this thing preſſes the harder, becauſe it is held by no mean perſons in the church of *Rome*, that the biſhoprick of *Rome* and the papacy are things ſeparable: and the Pope may quit that ſee and ſit in another, which to my underſtanding is an argument, that he who ſucceeded *Peter* at *Antioch*, is as much ſupreme by divine right as he that ſits at *Rome*;* both alike, that is, neither by divine ordinance: for if the Roman biſhops by Chriſt's intentions were to be head of the church, then by the ſame intention, the ſucceſſion muſt be continued in that ſee, and then let the Pope go whither he will, the biſhop of *Rome* muſt be the head, which they themſelves deny, and the Pope himſelf did not believe, when in a ſchiſm he ſat at *Avignon*; and that it was to be continued in the ſee of *Rome*, it is but offered to

* Vide Cameracenſ. Qu. veſpert.

us upon conjecture, upon an act of providence, as they fancy it, ſo ordering it by viſion, and this proved by an author which themſelves call fabulous and apocryphal, under the name of *Linus*, in *Biblioth. P P. de paſſione Petri & Pauli*: A goodly building which relies upon an event that was accidental, whoſe purpoſe was but inſinuated, the meaning of it but conjectured at, and this conjecture ſo uncertain, that it was an imperfect aim at the purpoſe of an event, which whether it was true or no, was ſo uncertain, that it is ten to one there was no ſuch matter. And yet again another degree of uncertainty is, to whom the biſhops of *Rome* do ſucceed: for St. *Paul* was as much biſhop of *Rome*, as St. *Peter* was; there he preſided, there he preached, and he it was that was the doctor of the uncircumciſion and of the gentiles, St. *Peter* of the circumciſion, and of the jews only; and therefore the converted jews at *Rome*, might with better reaſon claim the privilege of St. *Peter*, than the Romans and the churches in her communion, who do not derive from Jewiſh parents.

VII. 9. If the words were never ſo appropriate to *Peter*, or alſo communicated to his ſucceſſors, yet of what value will the conſequent be? what prerogative is entailed upon the chair of *Rome*? For that St. *Peter* was the miniſterial head of the church, is the moſt that is deſired to be proved by thoſe and all other words brought for the ſame purpoſes, and intereſts of that ſee: Now let the miniſterial head have what dignity can be imagined, let him be the firſt (and in all communities that are regular, and orderly there muſt be ſomething that is firſt, upon certain occaſions where an equal power cannot be exerciſed, and made pompous or ceremonial:) But will this miniſterial headſhip infer an infallibility? will it infer more

more than the headſhip of the jewiſh ſynagogue, where clearly the high prieſt was ſupreme in many ſenſes, yet in no ſenſe infallible? will it infer more to us, than it did amongſt the apoſtles? amongſt whom if for order's ſake, St. *Peter* was the firſt, yet he had no compulſory power over the apoſtles; there was no ſuch thing ſpoke of, nor any ſuch thing put in practice. And that the other apoſtles were by a perſonal privilege as infallible as himſelf, is no reaſon to hinder the exerciſe of juriſdiction or any compulſory power over them; for though in faith they were infallible, yet in manners and matter of fact as likely to err as St. *Peter* himſelf was, and certainly there might have ſomething happened in the whole college, that might have been a record of his authority, by tranſmitting an example of the exerciſe of ſome judicial power over ſome one of them: If he had but withſtood any of them to their faces, as St. *Paul* did him, it had been more than yet is ſaid in his behalf. Will the miniſterial headſhip infer any more than when the church in a community or a publick capacity, ſhould do any act of miniſtry eccleſiaſtical, he ſhall be firſt in order? ſuppoſe this to be a dignity to preſide in councils, which yet was not always granted him; ſuppoſe it to be a power of taking cogniſance of the major cauſes of biſhops when councils cannot be called; ſuppoſe it a double voice or the laſt deciſive, or the negative in the cauſes exterior; ſuppoſe it to be what you will of dignity or external regimen, which when all churches were united in communion, and neither the intereſt of ſtates, nor the engagement of opinions had made diſunion, might better have been acted than now it can; yet this will fall infinitely ſhort of a power to determine controverſies infallibly, and to preſcribe to all men's faith

and conſciences. A miniſterial headſhip, or the prime miniſter, cannot in any capacity become the foundation of the church to any ſuch purpoſe. And therefore men are cauſeleſsly amuſed with ſuch premiſes, and are afraid of ſuch concluſions which will never follow from the admiſſion of any ſenſe of theſe words, which can with any probability be pretended.

X. 8. I conſider that theſe arguments from ſcripture, are too weak to ſupport ſuch an authority which pretends to give oracles, and to anſwer infallibly in queſtions of faith, becauſe there is greater reaſon to believe the Popes of *Rome* have erred, and greater certainty of demonſtration, than theſe places can be that they are infallible; as will appear by the inſtances and perpetual experiment of their being deceived, of which there is no queſtion, but of the ſenſe of theſe places there is: and indeed if I had as clear ſcripture for their infallibility, as I have againſt their half communion, againſt their ſervice in an unknown tongue, worſhipping of images, and divers other articles, I would make no ſcruple of believing, but limit and conform my underſtanding to all their dictates, and believe it reaſonable all propheſying ſhould be reſtrained: but till then, I have leave to diſcourſe, and to uſe my reaſon; and to my reaſon, it ſeems not likely that neither Chriſt nor any of his apoſtles, St. *Peter* himſelf, nor St. *Paul* writing to the church of *Rome*, ſhould ſpeak the leaſt word or tittle of the infallibility of their biſhops, for it was certainly as convenient to tell us of a remedy, as to foretell that certainly there muſt needs be hereſies, and need of a remedy. And it had been a certain determination of the queſtion, if when ſo rare an opportunity was miniſtered, in the queſtion about circumciſion, that they ſhould have ſent to *Peter*, who for

his

his infallibility in ordinary, and his power of headship would not only with reason enough as being infallibly assisted, but also for his authority, have best determined the question, if at least the first christians had known so profitable and so excellent a secret; and although we have but little record, that the first council of *Jerusalem* did much observe the solemnities of law, and the form of conciliary proceedings, and the ceremonials; yet so much of it as is recorded, is against them, St. *James* and not St. *Peter*, gave the final sentence, and although St. *Peter* determined the question *pro libertate*, yet St. *James* made the decree, and the Assumentum too, and gave sentence they should abstain from some things there mentioned, which by way of temper he judged most expedient: And so it passed. And *St. *Peter* shewed no sign of a superior authority, nothing of superior jurisdiction, Ὅρα δὲ αὐτὸν μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ἀνάγκης τὰ προσταττόμενα γνώμης, οὐδὲν αὐθεντικῶς ἢ ἀρχικῶς.

XI. So that if this question be to be determined by scripture, it must either be ended by plain places or by obscure; plain places there are none, and these that are with greatest fancy pretended, are expounded by antiquity to contrary purposes. But if obscure places be all the αὐθεντία, by what means shall we infallibly find the sense of them? The Pope's interpretation, though in all other cases it might be pretended, in this cannot; for it is the thing in question, and therefore cannot determine for itself; either therefore we have also another infallible guide besides the Pope, and so we have two foundations and two heads (for this as well as the other upon the same reason)

* St. Chrysost. hom. 3. in act. Apost.

or elſe (which is indeed the truth) there is no infallible way to be infallibly aſſured that the Pope is infallible. Now it being againſt the common condition of men, above the pretences of all other governors eccleſiaſtical, againſt the analogy of ſcripture, and the deportment of the other apoſtles, againſt the œconomy of the church and St. *Peter*'s own entertainment, the preſumption lies againſt him, and theſe places are to be left to their prime intentions, and not put upon the rack, to force them to confeſs what they never thought.

XII. But now for Antiquity, if that be depoſed in this queſtion, there are ſo many circumſtances to be conſidered, to reconcile their words and their actions, that the proceſs is more troubleſome, than the argument can be concluding, or the matter conſiderable: But I ſhall a little conſider it, ſo far at leaſt as to ſhew either antiquity ſaid no ſuch thing as is pretended, or if they did, it is but little conſiderable, becauſe they did not believe themſelves; their practice was the greateſt evidence in the world againſt the pretence of their words. But I am much eaſed of a long diſquiſition in this particular (for I love not to prove a queſtion by arguments, whoſe authority is in itſelf as fallible, and by circumſtances made as uncertain as the queſtion) by the ſaying of *Æneas Sylvius*, that before the *Nicene* council every man lived to himſelf, and ſmall reſpect was had to the church of *Rome*, which practice could not well conſiſt with the doctrine of their biſhop's infallibility, and by conſequence ſupreme judgment and laſt reſolution in matters of faith; but eſpecially by the inſinuation and conſequent acknowledgment of *Bellarmine*, that for 1000 years together the fathers knew not of the doctrine of the Pope's infallibility,

* De Rom. Pont. l. 4. c. 2. § ſecunda ſententia.

infallibility; for *Nilus*, *Gerſon*, *Alemain*, the divines of *Paris*, *Alphonſus de Caſtro*, and Pope *Adrian* VI. perſons who lived 1400 after Chriſt, affirm, that infallibility is not ſeated in the Pope's perſon, that he may err and ſometimes actually hath, which is a clear demonſtration that the church knew no ſuch doctrine as this; there had been no decree nor tradition, nor general opinion of the fathers, or of any age before them; and therefore this opinion, which *Bellarmine* would fain blaſt if he could, yet in his concluſion he ſays it is not *proprie hæretica*. A device, and an expreſſion of his own without ſenſe or precedent. But if the fathers had ſpoken of it and believed it, why may not a diſagreeing perſon as well reject their authority when it is in behalf of *Rome*, as they of *Rome* without ſcruple caſt them off when they ſpeak againſt it? For as *Bellarmine*, being preſſed with the authority of *Nilus* biſhop of *Theſſalonica* and other fathers, ſays that the Pope acknowledges no fathers, but they are all his children, and therefore they cannot depoſe againſt him; and if that be true, why ſhall we take their teſtimonies for him? for if ſons depoſe in their father's behalf, it is twenty to one, but the adverſe party will be caſt, and therefore at the beſt it is but *ſuſpectum teſtimonium*. But indeed this diſcourſe ſignifies nothing, but a perpetual uncertainty in ſuch topicks, and that where a violent prejudice, or a concerning intereſt is engaged, men by not regarding what any man ſays, proclaim to all the world that nothing is certain, but divine authority.

XIII. But I will not take advantage of what *Bellarmine* ſays, nor what *Stapleton*, or any one of them all ſay, for that will be but to preſs upon perſonal perſuaſions, or to urge a general queſtion with a particular defaillance, and the queſtion is never the nearer to an end; for if *Bellarmine* ſays

any thing that is not to another man's purpose or perſuaſion, that man will be tried by his own argument, not by another's: And ſo would every man that loves his liberty, as all wiſe men do, and therefore retain it by open violence, or private evaſions. But to return.

XIV. An authority from *Irenæus* in this queſtion, and on behalf of the Pope's infallibility, or the authority of the ſee of *Rome*, or of the neceſſity of communicating with them, is very fallible; for beſides that there are almoſt a dozen anſwers to the words of the allegation, as is to be ſeen in thoſe that trouble themſelves in this queſtion with the allegation, and anſwering ſuch authorities, yet if they ſhould make for the affirmative of this queſtion, it is *proteſtatio contra factum*. For *Irenæus* had no ſuch great opinion of Pope *Victor*'s infallibility, that he believed things in the ſame degree of neceſſity that the Pope did, for therefore he chides him for excommunicating the *Aſian* biſhops, and ſo was all at a blow, in the queſtion concerning Eaſter-day; and in a queſtion of faith he expreſsly diſagreed from the doctrine of *Rome*; for *Irenæus* was of the millenary opinion, and believed it to be a tradition apoſtolical; now if the church of *Rome* was of that opinion, then why is ſhe not now? where is the ſucceſſion of her doctrine? but if ſhe was not of that opinion then, and *Irenæus* was, where was his belief of that church's infallibility? The ſame I urge concerning St. *Cyprian*, who was the head of a ſect in oppoſition to the church of *Rome*, in the queſtion of re-baptization, and he and the abettors, *Firmilian* and the other biſhops of *Cappadocia*, and the voiſinage, ſpoke harſh words of *Stephen*, and ſuch as become them not to ſpeak to an infallible doctor, and the ſupreme head of the church. I will urge none of them to the diſadvantage of that ſee, but

but only note the ſatyrs of *Firmilian* againſt him, becauſe it is of good uſe, to ſhew that it is poſſible for them, in their ill carriage, to blaſt the reputation and efficacy of a great authority: For he ſays that that church did pretend the authority of the apoſtles, * *Cum in multis ſacramentis divinæ rei, á principio diſcrepet, & ab Eccleſia Hieroſolymitanâ, & deſamet Petrum & Paulum tanquam authores.* And a little after *juſte dedignor* (ſays he) *apertam & manifeſtam ſtultitiam Stephani, per quam veritas Chriſtianæ petræ aboletur*, which words ſay plainly that for all the goodly pretence of apoſtolical authority, the church of *Rome* did then in many things of religion diſagree from divine inſtitution (and from the church of *Jeruſalem*, which they had as great eſteem of for religion ſake, as of *Rome* for its principality) and that ſtill in pretending to St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* they diſhonoured thoſe bleſſed apoſtles, and deſtroyed the honour of their pretence by their untoward prevarication; which words I confeſs paſs my ſkill to reconcile them to an opinion of infallibility; and although they were ſpoken by an angry perſon, yet they declare that in *Africa* they were not then perſuaded, as now they were at *Rome*: † *Nam nec Petrus quem primum Dominus elegit vendicavit ſibi aliquid inſolenter aut arroganter aſſumpſit, ut diceret ſe primatum tenere.* That was their belief then, and how the contrary hath grown up to that height, where now it is, all the world is witneſs: and now I ſhall not need to note concerning St. *Hierom*, that he gave a compliment to *Damaſus*, that he would not have given to *Liberius*, *Qui tecum non colligit ſpargit.* For it might be true enough of *Damaſus* who was a good biſhop and a right believer; but if

* Epiſt. Firmiliani contra. Steph. ad Cyprian. Vid. etiam Ep. Cypriani ad Pompeium.

† Cyprian Epiſt. ad Quintum fratrem.

Liberius's name had been put inſtead of *Damaſus*, the caſe had been altered with the name; for St. *Hierom* did believe and write it ſo, that *Liberius* had ſubſcribed to *Arrianiſm*. And if either he or any of the reſt had believed the Pope could not be a heretick nor his faith fail, but be ſo good and of ſo competent authority as to be a rule to Chriſtendom; why did they not appeal to the Pope in the Arrian controverſy? why was the biſhop of *Rome* made a party and a concurrent as other good biſhops were, and not a judge and an arbitrator in the queſtion? Why did the fathers preſcribe ſo many rules and cautions and proviſoes for the diſcovery of hereſy? Why were the emperors at ſo much charge, and the church at ſo much trouble, as to call and convene in councils reſpectively, to diſpute ſo frequently, to write ſo ſedulouſly, to obſerve all advantages againſt their adverſaries, and for the truth, and never offered to call for the Pope to determine the queſtion in his chair? Certainly no way could have been ſo expedite, none ſo concluding and peremptory, none could have convinced ſo certainly, none could have triumphed ſo openly over all diſcrepants as this, if they had known of any ſuch thing as his being infallible, or that he had been appointed by Chriſt to be the judge of controverſies. And therefore I will not trouble this diſcourſe to excuſe any more words either pretended or really ſaid to this purpoſe of the Pope, for they would but make books ſwell and the queſtion endleſs; I ſhall only to this purpoſe obſerve that the old writers were ſo far from believing the infallibility of the Roman church or biſhop, that many biſhops and many churches did actually live and continue out of the Roman

* De Script. Eccleſ. in Fortunatiano.

communion;

communion; particularly * St. *Auſtin*, who with 217 biſhops and their ſucceſſors for 100 years together, ſtood ſeparate from that church, if we may believe their own records: So did *Ignatius* of *Conſtantinople*, St. *Chryſoſtom*, St. *Cyprian*, *Firmilian*, thoſe biſhops of *Aſia* that ſeparated in the queſtion of Eaſter, and thoſe of *Africa* in the queſtion of rebaptization: But beſides this, moſt of them had opinions which the church of *Rome* diſavows now, and therefore did ſo then, or elſe ſhe hath innovated in her doctrine, which though it be moſt true and notorious, I am ſure ſhe will never confeſs. But no excuſe can be made for St. *Auſtin*'s diſagreeing, and conteſting in the queſtion of appeals to *Rome*, the neceſſity of communicating infants, the abſolute damnation of infants to the pains of hell, if they die before baptiſm, and divers other particulars. It was a famous act of the biſhops of *Liguria* and *Iſtria*, who ſeeing the Pope of *Rome* conſenting to the fifth ſynod, in diſparagement of the famous council of *Chalcedon*, which for their own intereſts they did not like of; they renounced ſubjection to his patriarchate, and erected a patriarch at *Aquileia*, who was afterwards tranſlated to *Venice*, where his name remains to this day. It is alſo notorious that moſt of the fathers were of opinion that the ſouls of the faithful did not enjoy the beatifick viſion before doomſday; whether *Rome* was then of that opinion or no, I know not, I am ſure now they are not; witneſs the councils of *Florence* and

* Ubi illa Auguſtini & reliquorum prudentia? quis jam ferat craſſiſſimæ ignorantiæ illam vocem in tot & tantis Patribus? *Alan. Cop. dialog.* p. 76. 77. *Vide etiam Bonifac. II. Epiſt. ad Eulalium Alexandrinum. Lindanum Panoplia. l.* 4. *c.* 89. *in fine. Salmeron Tom.* 12. *Tract.* 68. § *ad Canonem Sander de viſibili Monarchia, l.* 7. *n.* 411. *Baron. Tom.* 10. *A. D.* 878.

Trent;

Trent; but of this I ſhall give a more full account afterwards. But if to all this which is already noted, we add that great variety of opinions amongſt the fathers and councils in aſſignation of the canon, they not conſulting with the biſhop of *Rome*, nor any of them thinking themſelves bound to follow his rule in enumeration of the books of ſcripture, I think no more need to be ſaid as to this particular.

XV. 8. But now if after all this, there be ſome Popes, who were notorious hereticks, and preachers of falſe doctrine, ſome that made impious decrees both in faith and manners; ſome that have determined queſtions with egregious ignorance and ſtupidity, ſome with apparent ſophiſtry, and many to ſerve their own ends moſt openly, I ſuppoſe then the infallibility will diſband, and we may do to him as to other good biſhops, believe him when there is cauſe; but if there be none, then to uſe our conſciences, * *Non enim ſalvat Chriſtianum quod Pontifex conſtanter affirmat præceptum ſuum eſſe juſtum, ſed oportet illud examinari, & ſe juxta regulam ſuperius datum dirigere*: I would not inſtance and repeat the errors of dead biſhops, if the extreme boldneſs of the pretence did not make it neceſſary: But if we may believe *Tertullian*, Pope *Zepherinus* approved the prophecies of *Montanus*, and upon that approbation granted peace to the churches of *Aſia* and *Phrygia*, till *Praxeas* perſuaded him to revoke his act: But let this reſt upon the credit of *Tertullian*, whether ‡ *Zepherinus* was a *Montaniſt* or no; ſome ſuch thing there was for certain. Pope *Vigilius* denied two natures in Chriſt, and in his epiſtle to

* Tract. de interdict. Compoſ. à Theol. Venet. prop. 13.

† Lib. adver. Praxeam.

‡ Vid. Liberal. in breviario, c. 22. Durand. 4. diſt. 7. q. 4.

Theodora

Theodora the empreſs anathematized all them that ſaid he had two natures in one perſon; St. *Gregory* himſelf permitted prieſts to give confirmation, which is all one as if he ſhould permit deacons to conſecrate, they being by divine ordinance annext to the higher orders; and upon this very ground *Adrianus* affirms that the Pope may err in *definiendis dogmatibus fidei*. And that we may not fear we ſhall want inſtances, we may to ſecure it take their own confeſſion; * *Nam multæ ſunt decretales hæreticæ* ſays *Occham* as he is cited by *Almain*, † *& firmiter hoc credo* (ſays he for his own particular) *ſed non licet dogmatizare oppoſitum quoniam ſunt determinatæ*. So that we may as well ſee that it is certain that Popes may be hereticks, as that it is dangerous to ſay ſo, and therefore there are ſo few that teach it: All the patriarchs and the biſhop of *Rome* himſelf ſubſcribed to *Arrianiſm* (as ‡ *Baronius* confeſſes;) and § *Gratian* affirms that Pope *Anaſtaſius* the ſecond was ſtricken of God for communicating with the heretick *Photinus*. I know it will be made light of that *Gregory* the ſeventh ſays, the very exorciſts of the Roman church are ſuperior to princes. But what ſhall we think of that decretal of *Gregory* the third, who wrote to *Boniface* his legate in *Germany*, ‖ *Quod illi quorum uxores infirmitate aliqua morbidæ debitum reddere noluerunt, aliis poterant nubere*? was this a doctrine fit for the head of the church, an infallible doctor? It was plainly, if any thing ever was *doctrina Dæmoniorum*, and is noted for ſuch by *Gratian*, *cauſ.* 32. *q.* 7. *can. quod propoſuiſti*. Where the gloſs alſo intimates that the ſame privilege was granted to the Engliſhmen by *Gregory*,

* Quæ. de confirm. art. ult. † 3. diſt 24. q. unica.
‡ *A. D.* 357. n. 44. § Diſt. 19. cap. 9. Lib. 4. Ep. 2.
‖ Vid. Corranz. Sum. Concil. fol. 218. Edit. Antwerp.

quia

quia novi erant in fide. And ſometimes we had little reaſon to expect much better; for, not to inſtance in that learned diſcourſe in the * canon law *de majoritate & obedientia*, where the Pope's ſupremacy over kings is proved from the firſt chapter of *Geneſis*, and the Pope is the ſun, and the Emperor is the moon, for that was the fancy of one Pope perhaps; though made authentick and doctrinal by him, it was (if it be poſſible) more ridiculous, that Pope *Innocent* the third urges that the Moſaical law was ſtill to be obſerved, and that upon this argument, *Sane*, ſaith he, *cum Deuteronomium ſecunda lex interpretetur, ex vi vocabuli comprobatur, ut quod ibi decernitur in Teſtamento novo debeat obſervari.* Worſe yet, for when there was a corruption crept into the decree called ‡ *Sancta Romana*, where inſtead of theſe words *Sedulii opus heroicis verſibus deſcriptum*, all the old copies till of late read *hæreticis verſibus deſcriptum*; this very miſtake made many wiſe men, (as *Pierius* ſays) yea † Pope *Adrian* the ſixth, no worſe man, believe that all poetry was heretical, becauſe (forſooth) Pope *Gelaſius* whoſe decree that was, although he believed *Sedulius* to be a good catholick, yet as they thought, he concluded his verſes to be heretical: But theſe were ignorances; it hath been worſe amongſt ſome others, whoſe errors have been more malicious. Pope *Honorius* was condemned by the ſixth general ſynod, and his epiſtles burnt, and in the ſeventh action of the eighth ſynod, the acts of the Roman council under *Adrian* the ſecond are recited, in which it is ſaid that *Honorius* was juſtly anathematized, becauſe he was convict of hereſy. *Bellarmine* ſays it is probable that Pope *Adrian* and the Roman coun-

* Cap per venerabitem. qui fillii ſint legitimi. ‡ Diſt. 15. apud. Gratian. † De Sacerd. barb.

cil

cil were deceived with falſe copies of the ſixth ſynod, and that *Honorius* was no heretick. To this I ſay, that although the Roman ſynod and the eighth general ſynod, and Pope *Adrian*, altogether are better witneſſes for the thing than *Bellarmine*'s conjecture is againſt it, yet if we allow his conjecture we ſhall loſe nothing in the whole, for either the Pope is no infallible doctor, but may be a heretick as *Honorius* was, or elſe a council is to us no infallible determiner; I ſay, as to us, for if *Adrian* and the whole *Roman* council and the eighth general were all cozened with falſe copies of the ſixth ſynod, which was ſo little a while before them, and whoſe acts were tranſacted, and kept in the theatre and records of the catholick church; he is a bold man who will be confident that he hath true copies now. So that let which they pleaſe ſtand or fall, let the Pope be a heretick or the councils be deceived and palpably abuſed, (for the other we will diſpute it upon other inſtances and arguments when we ſhall know which part they will chooſe) in the mean time we ſhall get in the general what we loſe in the particular. This only, this device of ſaying the copies of the councils were falſe, was the ſtratagem of * *Albertus Pighius* 900 years after the thing was done, of which invention *Pighius* was preſently admoniſhed, blamed, and wiſhed to recant. Pope *Nicholas* explicated the myſtery of the ſacrament with ſo much ignorance and zeal that in condemning *Berengarius* he taught a worſe impiety. But what need I any more inſtances; it is a confeſſed caſe by *Baronius*, by *Biel*, by *Stella*, *Almain*, *Occham*, and *Canus*, † and generally by the beſt

* Vid. diatrib. de act. 6. & 7æ. Synod præfatione ad Lectorem & Dominicum Bannes 22æ. q. 1. a. 10. dub. 2.

† Picus Mirand. in expoſit. theorem 4.

ſcholars

ſcholars in the church of *Rome*, that a Pope may be a heretick, and that ſome of them actually were ſo, and no leſs than three general councils did believe the ſame thing: *viz.* ſixth, ſeventh, and eighth, as *Bellarmine* is pleaſed to acknowledge in his fourth book *de Pontifice Romano* c. 11. *reſp. ad Arg.* 4. And the canon *ſi Papa dist.* 40. affirms it in expreſs terms, that a Pope is judicable and puniſhable in that caſe. But there is no wound but ſome emperick or other will pretend to cure it, and there is a cure for this too. For though it be true that if a Pope were a heretick, the church might depoſe him, yet no Pope can be a heretick, not but that the man may, but the Pope cannot, for he is *ipſo facto* no Pope, for he is no chriſtian; ſo * *Bellarmine*: and ſo when you think you have him faſt, he is gone, and nothing of the Pope left; but who ſees not the extreme folly of this evaſion? For beſides that out of fear and caution he grants more than he needs, more than was ſought for in the queſtion, the Pope hath no more privilege than the abbot of *Cluny*, for he cannot be a heretick, nor be depoſed by a council, for if he be *manifeſtly* a heretick he is *ipſo facto* no abbot, for he is no chriſtian; and if the Pope be a heretick *privately and occultly*, for that he may be accuſed and judged ſaid the gloſs upon the canon *ſi Papa dist.* 40. And the abbot of *Cluny* and one of his meaneſt monks can be no more, therefore the caſe is all one. † But this is fitter to make ſport with than to interrupt a ſerious diſcourſe. And therefore although the canon *Sanctia Romana* approves all the decretals of Popes, yet that very decretal hath not decreed it firm enough, but that they are ſo warily received

* L. 2. c. 30. ubi ſupra. § eſt ergo.

† Vide Alphonſ. à Caſtr. lib. 1. adv. hæreſ. c. 4. hoc lemma ridentem affabre.

by

by them, that when they liſt they are pleaſed to diſſent from them; and it is evident in the extravagant of * *Sixtus* IV. *Com. de reliquiis*; who appointed a feaſt of the immaculate conception, a ſpecial office for the day, and indulgentids enough to the obſervers of it: And yet the *Dominicans* were ſo far from believing the Pope to be infallible and his decree authentick, that they declaimed againſt it in their pulpits ſo furiouſly and ſo long, till they were prohibited under pain of excommunication, to ſay the Virgin *Mary* was conceived in original ſin; now what ſolemnity can be more required for the Pope to make a cathedral determination of an article? The article was ſo concluded, that a feaſt was inſtituted for its celebration, and pain of excommunication threatened to them who ſhould preach the contrary; nothing more ſolemn, nothing more confident and ſevere: And yet after all this, to ſhew that whatſoever thoſe people would have us to believe, they will believe what they liſt themſelves: This thing was not determined *de fide* ſaith *Victorellus*; nay the author of the gloſs of the canon law hath theſe expreſs words, † *De feſto Conceptionis nihil dicitur quia celebrandum non eſt, ſicut in multis regionibus fit, & maxime in Anglia, & hæc eſt ratio, quia in peccatis concepta fuit ſicut & cæteri Sancti.* And the commiſſaries, of *Sixtus* V. and *Gregory* XIII. did not expunge theſe words, but left them upon record, not only againſt a received and more approved opinion of the Jeſuits and *Franciſ-*

* Vide etiam. Innocentium Serm. 2. de conſerat. Pontif. act. 7, 8 æ. Synodi. & Concil. 5. ſub Symmadio. vide Collat. 8. can 12. ubi P P. judicialem ſententiam P. vigilii in cauſa trium Capituſorum damnarunt expreſſe. Extra comm. Extrav. grave. Tit. X.

† De Angelo cuſtod. fol. 59. de conſecrat. diſt. 3. can pronunciand. gloſſ. verb. Nativit.

cans,

cans, but alſo in plain defiance of a decree made by their viſible head of the church, who (if ever any thing was decreed by a Pope, with an intent to oblige all Chriſtendom) decreed * this to that purpoſe.

XVI. So that without taking particular notice of it, that egregious ſophiſtry and flattery of the late writers of the Roman church is in this inſtance, beſides divers other before mentioned, clearly made invalid. For here the biſhop of *Rome* not as a private doctor, but as Pope, not by declaring his own opinion, but with an intent to oblige the church, gave ſentence in a queſtion which the *Dominicans* will ſtill account *pro non determinata*. And every decretal recorded in the canon law if it be falſe in the matter, is juſt ſuch another inſtance: And *Alphonſus á Caſtro* ſays it to the ſame purpoſe, in the inſtance of *Cæleſtine* diſſolving marriages for hereſy, *Neque Cæleſtini error talis fuit qui ſoli negligentiæ imputari debeat, ita ut illum erraſſe dicamus velut privatam perſonam & non ut Papam, quoniam hujuſmodi Cæleſtini definitio habetur in antiquis decretalibus in cap. Laudabilem, titulo de converſione infidelium; quam ego ipſe vidi & legi, lib. 1. adv. hæreſ. cap. 4.* And therefore 'tis a moſt intolerable folly to pretend that the Pope cannot err in his chair, though he may err in his cloſet, and may maintain a falſe opinion even to his death: For beſides that, it is ſottiſh to think that either he would not have the world of his own opinion (as all men naturally would) or that if he were ſet in his chair, he would determine contrary to himſelf in his ſtudy (and therefore to repreſent it as poſſible, they are fain to fly to a miracle for which they have no colour, neither inſtructions,

* Hàc in perpetuum valiturà conſtitutione ſtatuimus, &c. De reliquiis, &c. Extrav. Com. Sixt. 4. cap. 1.

nor

nor inſinuation, nor warrant, nor promiſe; beſides that it were impious and unreaſonable to depoſe him for hereſy, who may ſo eaſily, (even by ſetting himſelf in his chair and reviewing his theorems may eaſily be cured) it is alſo againſt a very great experience: for beſides the former allegations it is moſt notorious, that Pope *Alexander* III. in a council at *Rome* of 300 archbiſhops and biſhops *A. D.* 1179. condemned *Peter Lombard* of hereſy in a matter of great concernment, no leſs than ſomething about the incarnation; from which ſentence he was, after thirty ſix years abiding it, abſolved by Pope *Innocent* III. without repentance or dereliction of the opinion: now if this ſentence was not a cathedral dictate, as ſolemn and great as could be expected, or as is ſaid to be neceſſary to oblige all chriſtendom, let the great hyperaſpiſts of the Roman church be judges, who tell us that a particular council with the Pope's confirmation is made œcumenical by adoption, and is infallible and obliges all Chriſtendom, ſo *Bellarmine:* And therefore he ſays, that it is * *temerarium, erroneum, & proximum hæreſi,* to deny it, but whether it be or not it is all one, as to my purpoſe: For it is certain, that in a particular council confirmed by the Pope, if ever, then and there the Pope ſat himſelf in his chair, and it is as certain that he ſat beſides the cuſhion, and determined ridiculouſly and falſely in this caſe: † But this is a device for which there is no ſcripture, no tradition, no one dogmatical reſolute ſaying of any father, greek or latin, for above 1000 years after Chriſt: And themſelves when they liſt can acknowledge as much. And therefore *Bellarmine*'s ſaying, I perceive is believed by them to be true:

* L. 2. de. Concil. cap. 5. † De Pontif. Rom. c. 14. § reſpondeo. In 3. ſent. de 24. q. in conl. 6. dub. 6. in fine.

That there are many things in the * decretal epiſtles, which make not articles to be *de fide*. And therefore, *Non eſt neceſſario credendum determinatis per ſummum Pontificem*, ſays *Almain*: And this ſerves their turns in every thing they do not like, and therefore I am reſolved it ſhall ſerve my turn alſo for ſome thing, and that is, that the matter of the Pope's infallibility is ſo ridiculous and improbable, that they do not believe it themſelves: Some of them clearly practiced the contrary, and although Pope *Leo* X. hath determined the Pope to be above a council, yet the *Sorbon* to this day ſcorn it at the very heart. And I might urge upon them that ſcorn that *Almain* truly enough by way of argument alledges. It is a wonder that they who affirm the Pope cannot err in judgment, do not alſo affirm that he cannot ſin; they are like enough to ſay ſo, ſays he, if the vicious lives of the Popes did not make a daily confutation of ſuch flattery: Now for my own particular, I am as confident and think it as certain, that Popes are actually deceived in matters of chriſtian doctrine, as that they do prevaricate the laws of chriſtian piety: And therefore † *Alphonſus a Caſtro* calls them *impudentes papæ aſſentatores*, that aſcribe to him infallibility in judgement or interpretation of ſcripture.

XI. But if themſelves did believe it heartily, what excuſe is there in the world, for the ſtrange uncharitableneſs, or ſupine negligence of the Popes, that they do not ſet themſelves in their

* Proverbialiter olim dictum erat, de Decretalibus. Male cum rebus humanis actum eſſe, ex quo decretis alæ acceſſerunt. ſcil. cum Decretales poſt decretum Gratiani ſub nomine Gregorii noni edebantur.

† De Authorit. Eccleſ. cap. 10. in fine.

‡ L. 1. c. 4. adverſ. hæreſ. edit. Paris 1534. In ſeqq. non expurgantur iſta verba, at idem ſenſus manet.

chair

chair and write infallible commentaries, and determine all controverſies without error, and blaſt all hereſies with the word of their mouth, declare what is and what is not *de fide*, that his diſciples and confidents may agree upon it; reconcile the *Franciſcans* and *Dominicans*, and expound all myſteries? for it cannot be imagined but he that was endued with ſo ſupreme power in order to ſo great ends, was alſo fitted with proportionable, that is, extraordinary perſonal abilities, ſucceeding and derived upon the perſons of all the Popes. And then the doctors of his church, need not trouble themſelves with ſtudy, nor writing explications of ſcripture, but might wholly attend to practical devotion, and leave all their ſcholaſtical wranglings, the diſtinguiſhing opinions of their orders, and they might have a fine church, ſomething like fairy land, or *Lucian*'s kingdom in the moon: But if they ſay they cannot do this when they liſt, but when they are moved to it by the ſpirit, then we are never the nearer; for ſo may the biſhop of *Angoleſme* write infallible commentaries when the holy ghoſt moves him to it, for I ſuppoſe his motions are not ineffectual, but he will ſufficiently aſſiſt us in performing of what he actually moves us to: But among ſo many hundred decrees which the Popes of *Rome* have made or confirmed and atteſted (which is all one) I would fain know in how many of them did the holy ghoſt aſſiſt them? If they know it, let them declare it, that it may be certain which of their decretals are *de fide*; for as yet none of his own church knows: If they do not know, then neither can we know it from them, and then we are as uncertain as ever, and beſides the holy ghoſt may poſſibly move him, and he by his ignorance of it may neglect ſo profitable a motion, and then his promiſe of infallible aſſiſtance will be to very little purpoſe, becauſe it is

with very much fallibility applicable to practice: And therefore it is abſolutely uſeleſs to any man or any church, becauſe, ſuppoſe it ſettled in *Theſi*, that the Pope is infallible, yet whether he will do his duty, and perform thoſe conditions of being aſſiſted which are required of him, or whether he be a ſecret ſimoniack (for if he be, he is *ipſo facto*, no Pope) or whether he be a biſhop, or prieſt, or a chriſtian, being all uncertain; every one of theſe depending upon the intention and power of the baptizer or ordainer, which alſo are fallible, becauſe they depend upon the honeſty and power of other men; we cannot be infallibly certain of any Pope that he is infallible; and therefore when our queſtions are determined, we are never the nearer, but may hug ourſelves in an imaginary truth, the certainty of finding truth out depending upon ſo many fallible and contingent circumſtances. And therefore, the thing, if it were true, being ſo to no purpoſe, it is to be preſumed that God never gave a power ſo impertinently, and from whence no benefit can accrue to the chriſtian church, for whoſe uſe and benefit, if at all, it muſt needs have been appointed.

XVIII. But I am too long in this impertinency: If I were bound to call any man maſter upon earth, and to believe him upon his own affirmative and authority; I would of all men leaſt follow him that pretends he is infallible and cannot prove it. For that he cannot prove it, makes me as uncertain as ever, and that he pretends to infallibility makes him careleſs of uſing ſuch means which will morally ſecure thoſe wiſe perſons, who knowing their own aptneſs to be deceived, uſe what endeavours they can to ſecure themſelves from error, and ſo become the better and more probable guides.

XIX.

XIX. Well! Thus far we are come: Although we are ſecured in fundamental points from involuntary error, by the plain, expreſs, and dogmatical places of ſcripture, yet in other things we are not, but may be, invincibly miſtaken, becauſe of the obſcurity and difficulty in the controverted parts of ſcripture, by reaſon of the incertainty of the means of its interpretation, ſince tradition is of an uncertain reputation, and ſometimes evidently falſe; councils are contradictory to each other, and therefore certainly are equally deceived, many of them, and therefore all may; and then the Popes of *Rome* are very likely to miſlead us, but cannot aſcertain us of truth in matter of queſtion; and in this world we believe in part, and propheſy in part, and this imperfection ſhall never be done away till we be tranſlated to a more glorious ſtate; either we muſt throw our chances, and get truth by accident or predeſtination, or elſe we muſt lie ſafe in a mutual toleration, and private liberty of perſuaſion, unleſs ſome other anchor can be thought upon, where we may faſten our floating veſſels, and ride ſafely.

SECT. VIII.

Of the diſability of Fathers, or Writers Eccleſiaſtical, to determine our Queſtions, with certainty and truth.

I. THERE are ſome that think they can determine all queſtions in the world by two or three ſayings of the fathers, or by the con-

conſent of ſo many as they will pleaſe to call a concurrent teſtimony: but this conſideration will ſoon be at an end; for if the fathers, when they are witneſſes of tradition do not always ſpeak truth, as it happened in the caſe of *Papias* and his numerous followers for almoſt three ages together, then is their teſtimony more improbable when they diſpute or write commentaries.

II. 2. The Fathers of the firſt ages ſpake unitedly concerning divers queſtions of ſecret theology, and yet were afterwards contradicted by one perſonage of great reputation, whoſe credit had ſo much influence upon the world, as to make the contrary opinion become popular; why then may not we have the ſame liberty, when ſo plain an uncertainty is in their perſuaſions, and ſo great contrariety in their doctrines? But this is evident in the caſe of abſolute predeſtination, which till St. *Auſtin*'s time no man preached, but all taught the contrary, and yet the reputation of this one excellent man altered the ſcene. But if he might diſſent from ſo general a doctrine, why may not we do ſo too, it being pretended that he is ſo excellent a precedent to be followed, if we have the ſame reaſon? He had no more authority nor diſpenſation to diſſent, than any biſhop hath now. And therefore St. *Auſtin* hath dealt ingenuouſly, and as he took this liberty to himſelf, ſo he denies it not to others, but indeed forces them to preſerve their own liberty: And therefore when St. *Hierom* had a great mind to follow the Fathers in a point that he fancied, and the beſt ſecurity he had, was *Patiaris me cum talibus errare*, St. *Auſtin* would not endure it, but anſwered his reaſon, and neglected the authority. And therefore it had been moſt unreaſonable that we ſhould do that now, though in his behalf, which he towards greater

greater perſonages (for ſo they were then) at that time judged to be unreaſonable. It is a plain receſſion from antiquity, which was determined by the council of [a] *Florence*, *piorum animas purgatas, &c. mox in Cœlum recipi, & intueri clare ipſum Deum trinum & unum ſicuti eſt*; As who pleaſe to try, may ſee it dogmatically reſolved to the contrary by [b] *Juſtin Martyr*, [c] *Irenæus*, by [d] *Origen*, [e] St. *Chryſoſtom*, [f] *Theodoret*, [g] *Arathas Cæſarienſis*, [h] *Euthymius*, who may anſwer for the greek church, and it is plain that it was the opinion of the greek church by that great difficulty the Romans had of bringing the Greeks to ſubſcribe to the *Florentine* council, where the Latins acted their maſter-piece of wit and ſtratagem, the greateſt that hath been till the famous and ſuperpolitick deſign of *Trent*. And for the latin church, [i] *Tertullian*, [k] St. *Ambroſe*, [l] St. *Auſtin*, [m] St. *Hilary*, [n] *Prudentius*, [o] *Lactantius*, [p] *Victorinus Martyr*, and [q] St. *Bernard* are known to be of opinion that the ſouls of the ſaints are in *abditis receptaculis, & exterioribus atriis*, where they expect the reſurrection of their bodies, and the glorification of their ſouls, and though they all believe them to be happy, yet they enjoy not the beatifick viſion before the reſurrection: Now there being ſo full a conſent of fathers (for many more may be added) and the decree of Pope *John* XXII. beſides, who was ſo confident for his decree that he commanded the univerſity of *Paris* to ſwear that they would preach

[a] Seſſ. ult. [b] Q. 60. ad Chriſtian. [c] Lib. 5. [d] Hom 7. in Levit. [e] Hom. 39. in 1 Cor. [f] In c. 11. ad Heb [g] In c. 6. ad Apoc. [h] In 16. c. Luc. [i] Lib. 4. adv. Mar. [k] L. 2. de. Cain. c. 2. [l] Ep. 111. ad Fortunatianum. [m] In Pſal. 138. [n] De exeq. defunctor. [o] Lib. 7. 2. 21. [p] In c. 6. Apoc. [q] Serm. 3. de om. ſanctis. Vid. enim, St. Aug. in Enchir. c. 108. & l. 12. de civit. Dei. c. 9. & in Pſ. 36. & in l. 1. retract. c. 14. Vid. inſuper teſtimonia quæ collegit. Spala. l. 5. c. 8. n. 98. de repub. Eccl. & Sixt. Senenſ. l. 6. annot. 345.

it and no other, and that none ſhould be promoted to degrees in theology, that did not ſwear the like, (as [r] *Occham*, [s] *Gerſon*, [t] *Marſilius*, and [u] *Adrianus* report :) Since it is eſteemed lawful to diſſent from all theſe, I hope no man will be ſo unjuſt to preſs other men to conſent to an authority which he himſelf judges to be incompetent. Theſe two great inſtances are enough, but if more were neceſſary I could inſtance in the opinion of the *Chiliaſts*, maintained by the ſecond and third centuries and diſavowed ever ſince; in the doctrine of communicating infants, taught and practiſed as neceſſary by the fourth and fifth centuries, and deteſted by the latin church in all the following ages: in the variety of opinions concerning the very form of baptiſm; ſome keeping cloſe to the inſtitution and the words of its firſt ſanction, others affirming it to be ſufficient, if it be adminiſtered *in nomine Chriſti*; particularly [w] St. *Ambroſe*, Pope *Nicholas* the firſt, [x] V. *Bede* and [y] St. *Bernard*, beſides ſome writers of after ages, as *Hugo de S. Victore*, and the doctors generally his cotemporaries. And it would not be inconſiderable to obſerve, that if any ſynod, general, national, or provincial, be receded from by the church of the later age, (as there have been very many) then, ſo many fathers as were then aſſembled and united in opinion are eſteemed no authority to determine our perſuaſions. Now ſuppoſe 200 fathers aſſembled in ſuch a council, if all they had wrote books, and authorities, 200 authorities had been alledged in confirmation of an opinion, it would have made a mighty noiſe, and loaded any man with an inſupportable prejudice that ſhould

[r] In oper. 90. dierum. [s] Serm. de Paſchal. [t] In 4. ſent. q. 13. a. 3. [u] In. 4. de Sacram. confirmat. [w] De conſecrat. diſt. 4. c. a quodam Judæo. [x] In cap. 10. act. Ep. 340.

diſſent:

diſſent: and yet every opinion maintained againſt the authority of any one council, though but provincial, is in its proportion ſuch a violent receſſion and neglect of the authority and doctrine of ſo many fathers as were then aſſembled, who did as much declare their opinion in thoſe aſſemblies by their ſuffrages, as if they had writ it in ſo many books; and their opinion is more conſiderable in the aſſembly than in their writings, becauſe it was more deliberate, aſſiſted, united and more dogmatical. In purſuance of this obſervation, it is to be noted by way of inſtance, that St. *Auſtin* and two hundred and ſeventeen biſhops and all their ſucceſſors * for a whole age together did conſent in denying appeals to *Rome*; and yet the authority of ſo many fathers (all true catholicks) is of no force now at *Rome* in this queſtion; but if it be in a matter they like, one of theſe fathers alone is ſufficient. The doctrine of St. *Auſtin* alone brought in the feſtival and veneration of the aſſumption of the bleſſed virgin, and the hard ſentence paſſed at *Rome* upon unbaptiſed infants, and the *Dominican* opinion concerning predetermination, derived from him alone as from their original: ſo that if a father ſpeaks for them, it is wonderful to ſee what tragedies are ſtirred up againſt them that diſſent, as is to be ſeen in that excellent nothing of *Campian*'s ten reaſons. But if the fathers be againſt them, then *Patres in quibuſdam non leviter lapſi ſunt*, ſays *Bellarmine*, and *conſtat quoſdam ex præcipuis*, it is certain the chiefeſt

* Vide Epiſt. Bonifacii II. apud Nicolinum, tom. 2. Concil. pag. 544. & exemplar precum Eulalii apud eundem ibid. p. 525. Qui anathematizat omnes deciſores ſuos qui in ea cauſa Romæ ſe opponendo rectæ fidei regulum prævaricari ſunt, inter quos tamen fuit Auguſtinus, quem pro maledicto Cæleſtinus tacite agnoſcit, admittendo *ſc.* exemplar. precum. *Vid. Doctor. Marta. de juriſdict. part.* 4. p. 273. *& Eraſm. annot. in Hieron. præfat. in Daniel.*

of

of them have foully erred. Nay *Poſa*, *Salmeron*, and *Wadding*, in the queſtion of the immaculate conception, make no ſcruple to diſſent from antiquity; to prefer new doctors before the old, and to juſtify themſelves, bring inſtances in which the church of *Rome* had determined againſt the fathers. And it is not excuſe enough to ſay, that ſingly the fathers may err, but if they concur they are certain teſtimony. For there is no queſtion this day diſputed by perſons that are willing to be tried by the fathers, ſo generally atteſted on either ſide, as ſome points are which both ſides diſlike ſeverally or conjunctly. And therefore it is not honeſt for either ſide to preſs the authority of the fathers, as a concluding argument in matter of diſpute, unleſs themſelves will be content to ſubmit in all things to the teſtimony of an equal number of them, which I am certain neither ſide will do.

III. 3. If I ſhould reckon all the particular reaſons againſt the certainty of this topick, it would be more than needs as to this queſtion, and therefore I will abſtain from all diſparagement of thoſe worthy perſonages, who were excellent lights to their ſeveral dioceſes, and cures. And therefore I will not inſtance that † *Clemens Alexandrinus* taught that Chriſt felt no hunger or thirſt, but eat only to make demonſtration of the verity of his human nature: Nor that St. *Hilary* taught that Chriſt in his ſufferings had no ſorrow; nor that *Origen* taught the pains of hell not to have an eternal duration: Nor that St. *Cyprian* taught rebaptization; nor that *Athenagoras* condemned ſecond marriages; nor that St. *John Damaſcen* ſaid, Chriſt only prayed in appearance, not really and in truth; I will let them all reſt in peace, and

* De verb. Dei l. 3. c. 10. §. diceſ. † Strom. l. 3. & 6.

their

their memories in honour; for if I ſhould enquire into the particular probations of this article, I muſt do to them as I ſhould be forced to do now; if any man ſhould ſay that the writings of the ſchool-men were excellent argument and authority to determine men's perſuaſions; I muſt conſider their writings, and obſerve their defaillances, their contradictions, the weakneſs of their arguments, the miſ-allegation of ſcripture, their inconſequent deductions, their falſe opinions, and all the weakneſſes of humanity, and the failings of their perſons, which no good man is willing to do, unleſs he be compelled to it by a pretence that they are infallible, or that they are followed by men even into errors or impiety. And therefore ſince there is enough in the former inſtances, to cure any ſuch miſ-perſuaſion and prejudice, I will not inſtance in the innumerable particularities that might perſuade us to keep our liberty intire, or to uſe it diſcreetly. For it is not to be denied but that great advantages are to be made by their writings, *& probabile eſt quod omnibus, quod pluribus, quod ſapientibus videtur*; if one wiſe man ſays a thing, it is an argument to me to believe it in its degree of probation, that is, proportionable to ſuch an aſſent as the authority of a wiſe man can produce, and when there is nothing againſt it that is greater; and ſo in proportion higher and higher as more wiſe men (ſuch as the old doctors were) do affirm it. But that which I complain of is, that we look upon wiſe men that lived long ago with ſo much veneration and miſtake, that we reverence them not for having been wiſe men, but that they lived long ſince. But when the queſtion is concerning authority, there muſt be ſomething to build it on; a divine commandment, human ſanction, excellency of ſpirit, and greatneſs of underſtanding, on which things all

human

human authority is regularly built. But now if we had lived in their times (for ſo we muſt look upon them now, as they did who without prejudice beheld them) I ſuppoſe we ſhould then have beheld them, as we in *England* look on thoſe prelates, who are of great reputation for learning and ſanctity: here only is the difference; when perſons are living, their authority is depreſſed by their perſonal defailances, and the contrary intereſts of their cotemporaries, which diſband when they are dead, and leave their credit intire upon the reputation of thoſe excellent books, and monuments of learning and piety which are left behind: But beyond this, why the biſhop of *Hippo* ſhall have greater authority than the biſhop of the *Canaries*, *cæteris paribus*, I underſtand not. For did they that lived (to inſtance) in St. *Auſtin*'s time believe all that he wrote? If they did, they were much to blame, or elſe himſelf was to blame for retracting much of it a little before his death; and if while he lived, his affirmative was no more authority, than derives from the credit of one very wiſe man, againſt whom alſo very wiſe men were oppoſed; I know not why his authority ſhould prevail further now; for there is nothing added to the ſtrength of his reaſon, ſince that time, but only that he hath been in great eſteem with poſterity: And if that be all, why the opinion of the following ages, ſhall be of more force than the opinion of the firſt ages, againſt whom St. *Auſtin* in many things clearly did oppoſe himſelf, I ſee no reaſon; or whether the firſt ages were againſt him or no, yet that he is approved by the following ages is no better argument; for it makes his authority not to be innate, but derived from the opinion of others, and ſo to be *precaria*, and to depend upon others, who if they

ſhould

ſhould change their opinions, and ſuch examples there have been many, then there were nothing left to urge our conſent to him; which when it was at the beſt, was only this, becauſe he had the good fortune to be believed by them that came after, he muſt be ſo ſtill; and becauſe it was no argument for the old doctors before him, this will not be very good in his behalf: The ſame I ſay of any company of them, I ſay not ſo of all of them, it is to no purpoſe to ſay it, for there is no queſtion this day in conteſtation, in the explication of which all the old writers did conſent: In the aſſignation of the canon of ſcripture, they never did conſent for ſix hundred years together, and then by that time the biſhops had agreed indifferently well, and but indifferently, upon that, they fell out in twenty more; and except it be in the apoſtles creed, and articles of ſuch nature, there is nothing which may with any colour be called a conſent, much leſs tradition univerſal.

IV. 4. But I will rather chuſe to ſhew the uncertainty of this topick by ſuch an argument, which was not in the fathers power to help, ſuch as makes no invaſion upon their great reputation, which I deſire ſhould be preſerved as ſacred as it ought. For other things, let who pleaſe read Mr. *Daillè du vray uſage des Peres*: But I ſhall only conſider that the writings of the fathers have been ſo corrupted by the intermixture of hereticks, ſo many falſe books put forth in their names, ſo many of their writings loſt which would more clearly have explicated their ſenſe, and at laſt an open profeſſion made, and a trade of making the fathers ſpeak, not what themſelves thought, but what other men pleaſed, that it is a great inſtance of God's providence and care of his church, that we have ſo much good preſerved in the writings which we receive from the fathers,

and

and that all truth is not as clear gone, as is the certainty of their great authority and reputation.

V. The publiſhing books with the inſcription of great names began in St. *Paul*'s time; for ſome had troubled the church of *Theſſalonica* with a falſe epiſtle in St. *Paul*'s name, againſt the inconvenience of which he arms them in 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 1. And this increaſed daily in the church. The *Arrians* wrote an epiſtle to *Conſtantine*, under the name of *Athanaſius*, and the *Eutychians* wrote againſt *Cyrill* of *Alexandria*, under the name of * *Theodoret*; and of the age in which the ſeventh ſynod was kept; *Eraſmus* reports, † *Libris falſo celebrium virorum titulo commendatis ſcatere omnia.* It was then a publick buſineſs, and a trick not more baſe than publick: But it was more ancient than ſo, and it is memorable in the books attributed to St. *Baſil*, containing thirty chapters *de Spiritu Sancto*, whereof fifteen were plainly added by another hand under the covert of St. *Baſil*, as appears in the difference of the ſtile, in the impertinent digreſſions, againſt the cuſtom of that excellent man, by ſome paſſages contradictory to others of St. *Baſil*, by citing *Meletius* as dead before him, who yet lived three ‡ years after him, and by the very frame and manner of the diſcourſe; and yet is was ſo handſomely carried, and ſo well ſerved the purpoſes of men, that it was quoted under the title of St. *Baſil* by many, but without naming the number chapters; and by St. *John Damaſcen* in theſe words, § *Baſilius in opere triginta capitum de Spiritu S. ad Amphilochium*, and to the ſame purpoſe, and in the number of 27 and 29. chapters he is cited by ‖ *Photius*, by *Euthymius*, by *Burchord*, by *Zonaras*,

* Apolog. Athanaſ. ad Conſtant. † Vide Baron. *A. D.* 553. ‡ Vide Baron. in Annal. § L. 1. de imagin. orat. 1. ‖ Nomocan. tit. 1. cap. 3.

Balſamon

Balſamon and *Nicephorus*; but for this ſee more in *Eraſmus*'s preface upon this book of St. *Baſil.* There is an epiſtle goes ſtill under the name of St. *Hierom ad Demetriadem viginem*, and is of great uſe in the queſtion of predeſtination, with its appendices, and yet a very * learned man 800 years ago did believe it to be written by a *Pelagian*, and undertakes to confute divers parts of it, as being high and confident *Pelagianiſm*, and written by *Julianus Epiſc. Eclanenſis*, but *Gregorius Ariminenſis* from St. *Auſtin* affirms it to have been written by † *Pelagius* himſelf. I might inſtance in too many; there is not any one of the fathers who is eſteemed author of any conſiderable number of books, that hath eſcaped untouched; but the abuſe in this kind hath been ſo evident that now if any intereſted perſon of any ſide be preſſed with an authority very pregnant againſt him, he thinks to eſcape by accuſing the edition, or the author, or the hands it paſſed through, or at laſt he therefore ſuſpects it, becauſe it makes againſt him; both ſides being reſolved that they are in the right, the authorities that they admit, they will believe not to be againſt them; and they which are too plainly againſt them, ſhall be no authorities: And indeed the whole world hath been ſo much abuſed that every man thinks he hath reaſon to ſuſpect whatſoever is againſt him, that is, what he pleaſes; which proceeding only produces this truth, that there neither is nor can be any certainty, nor very much probability in ſuch allegations.

VI. But there is a worſe miſchief than this, beſides thoſe very many which are not yet diſcovered, which like the peſtilence deſtroys in the

* Vide Beda. de gratia Chriſti adv. Julianum.

† Greg. Arim. in 2. ſent. diſt. 26. q. 1. a 3.

dark,

dark, and grows into inconvenience more inſenſibly and irremediably, and that is, corruption of particular places, by inſerting words and altering them to contrary ſenſes: A thing which the fathers of the ſixth general ſynod complained of concerning the conſtitution of * St. *Clement*, *quibus jam olim ab iis qui a fide aliena ſentiunt adulterina quædam etiam pietate aliena introducta ſunt quæ divinorum nobis Decretorum elegantem & venuſtam ſpeciem obſcurarunt:* And ſo alſo have his recognitions, ſo have his epiſtles been uſed, if at leaſt they were his at all, particularly the fifth decretal epiſtle that goes under the name of St. *Clement*, in which community of wives is taught upon the authority of St. *Luke*, ſaying the firſt chriſtians had all things common; if all things, then wives alſo ſays the epiſtle; a forgery like to have been done by ſome *Nicolaitan*, or other impure perſon: There is an epiſtle of *Cyril* extant to *Succeſſus* biſhop of *Diocæſarea*, in which he relates that he was aſked by *Budus* biſhop of *Emeſſa*, whether he did approve of the epiſtle of *Athanaſius* to *Epictetus* biſhop of *Corinth*, and that his anſwer was, † *Si hæc apud vos ſcripta non ſint adultera: Nam plura ex his ab hoſtibus Eccleſiæ deprehenduntur eſſe depravata:* And this was done even while the authors themſelves were alive; for ſo *Dionyſius* of *Corinth* complained that his writings were corrupted by hereticks, and Pope *Leo*, that his epiſtle to *Flavianus* was perverted by the Greeks: And in the ſynod of ‡ *Conſtantinople* before quoted (the ſixth ſynod) *Macarius* and his diſciples were convicted *quod Sanctorum teſtimonia aut truncarint aut depravarint:* Thus the third chapter of St. *Cyprian*'s book, *de unitate Eccleſiæ* in the edition of *Pamelius* ſuffered great alteration: Theſe words

* Can. 2. † Euſ. l. 4. c. 23. ‡ Act. 8. vid. etiam. Synod 7. act 4.

[*Primatus*

[*Primatus Petro datur*] wholly inſerted, and theſe [*ſuper Cathedram Petri fundata eſt Eccleſia*] and whereas it was before, *ſuper unum ædificat Eccleſiam Chriſtus*, that not being enough they have made it *ſuper* [*illum*] *unum*. Now theſe additions are againſt the faith of all old copies, before *Minutius* and *Pamelius*, and againſt *Gratian*, even after himſelf had been chaſtiſed by the Roman correctors, the commiſſaries of *Gregory* XIII. as is to be ſeen where theſe words are alledged, *Decret. c.* 24. *Q.* 1. *can. loquitur Dominus ad Petrum.* So that we may ſay of *Cyprian*'s works as *Pamelius* himſelf ſaid concerning his writings, and the writings of other of the fathers, *unde colligimus* (ſaith he) * *Cypriani ſcripta ut & aliorum Veterum a librariis varie fuiſſe interpolata.* But *Gratian* himſelf could do as fine a feat when he liſted, or elſe ſome body did it for him, and it was in this very queſtion, their beloved article of the Pope's ſupremacy; for *de pœnit. diſt.* 1. *c. poteſt fieri.* he quotes theſe words out of St. *Ambroſe*, *Non habent Petri hæreditatem qui non habent Petri ſedem; fidem*, not *ſedem*, it is in St. *Ambroſe*; but this error was made authentick by being inſerted into the code of the law of the catholick church; and conſidering how little notice the clergy had of antiquity, but what was tranſmitted to them by *Gratian*, it will be no great wonder that all this part of the world ſwallowed ſuch a bole and the opinion that was wrapped in it. But I need not inſtance in *Gratian* any further, but refer any one that deſires to be ſatisfied concerning this collection of his, to † *Auguſtinus* archbiſhop of *Tarracon in emendatione Gratiani*, where he ſhall find fopperies and

* Annot. Cyprian. ſuper. Conc. Carthag. n. 1.

† Vid. Ind. Expurg. Belg. in Bertram. & Flandr. Hiſpan. Portugal. Neopolitan. Romanum. Junium in præfat. ad Ind. Expurg. Berg. Haſen mullerum. pag. 275. Withrington. Apolog. num 449.

corruptions good store noted by that learned man: But that the *Indices Expurgatorii* commanded by authority, and practised with publick licence, professe to alter and correct the sayings of the fathers, and to reconcile them to the catholick sense by putting in and leaving out, is so great an imposture, so unchristian a proceeding, that it hath made the faith of all books and all authors justly to be suspected; for considering their infinite diligence and great opportunity, as having had most of the copies in their own hands, together with an unsatisfiable desire of prevailing in their right, or in their wrong, they have made an absolute destruction of this topick, and when the fathers speak * latin, or breath in a Roman diocese, although the providence of God does infinitely over-rule them, and that it is next to a miracle that in the monuments of antiquity, there is no more found that can pretend for their advantage than there is, which indeed is infinitely inconsiderable: Yet our questions and uncertainties are infinitely multiplied, instead of a probable and reasonable determination. For since the Latins always complained of the Greeks, for privately corrupting the ancient records both of councils and fathers; and now the Latins make open profession not of corrupting, but of correcting their writings (that's the word) and at the most it was but a human authority, and that of persons not always learned, and very often deceived; the whole matter is so unreasonable, that it is not worth a further disquisition. But if any one desires to enquire further, he may be satisfied in *Erasmus*, in *Henry* and *Robert Stephens*, in their prefaces before the editions of

* Videat Lector Andream Cristovium in Bello. Jesuitico, & Joh. Reinolds in libr. de idol. Rom. † Vid. Ep. Nicolai ad Michael. Imperat.

the

the fathers, and their obſervations upon them; in *Bellarmine de ſcript. Eccleſ.* in Dr. *Reynolds, de libris Apocryphis*, in *Scaliger*, and *Robert Coke*, of *Leeds*, in *Yorkſhire*, in his book, *De cenſura Patrum.*

SECT. IX.

Of the incompetency of the Church in its diffuſive capacity to be judge of Controverſies, and the impertinency of that pretence of the Spirit.

I. AND now after all theſe conſiderations of the ſeveral Topicks, Tradition, Councils, Popes, and ancient Doctors of the church; I ſuppoſe it will not be neceſſary, to conſider the authority of the Church apart. For the Church either ſpeaks by tradition, or by a repreſentative body in a council, by Popes, or by the Fathers: For the church is not a *Chimæra*, not a ſhadow, but a company of men believing in Jeſus Chriſt; which men either ſpeak by themſelves immediately, or by their rulers, or by their proxies and repreſentatives; now I have conſidered it in all ſenſes, but in its diffuſive capacity; in which capacity ſhe cannot be ſuppoſed to be a judge of controverſies, both becauſe in that capacity ſhe cannot teach us, as alſo becauſe if by a judge we mean all the church diffuſed in all its parts and members, ſo there can be no controverſy, for if all men be of that opinion, then there is no queſtion conteſted; if they be not all of a mind, how can the whole diffuſive catholick church be pretended in defiance of any one article, where the diffuſive church being divided, part goes this way, and part another? But if it be ſaid, the greateſt part muſt carry it; beſides that it is impoſſible for us

to know which way the greateſt part goes in many queſtions, it is not always true that the greater part is the beſt, ſometimes the contrary is moſt certain, and it is often very probable, but it is always poſſible. And when paucity of followers was objected to *Liberius*, he gave this in anſwer, * There was a time when but three children of the captivity reſiſted the king's decree. And *Athanaſius* † wrote on purpoſe againſt thoſe that did judge of truth by multitudes, and indeed it concerned him ſo to do, when he alone ſtood in the gap againſt the numerous armies of the Arrians.

II. But if there could in this caſe be any diſtinct conſideration of the church, yet to know which is the true church is ſo hard to be found out, that the greateſt queſtions of Chriſtendom are judged before you can get to your judge, and then there is no need of him. For thoſe queſtions which are concerning the judge of queſtions muſt be determined before you can ſubmit to his judgement, and if you can yourſelves determine thoſe great queſtions which conſiſt much in univerſalities, then alſo you may determine the particulars as being of leſs difficulty. And he that conſiders how many notes there are given to know the true church, no leſs than 15 by *Bellarmine*, and concerning every one of them almoſt whether it be a certain note or no, there are very many queſtions and uncertainties, and when it is reſolved which are the notes, there is more diſpute about the application of theſe notes than of the Πρωτον ψευδος, will quickly be ſatisfied that he had better ſit ſtill, than to go round about a difficult and troubleſome paſſage, and at laſt get no further, but return to the place from whence he firſt ſet-

* Theod. l. 2. c. 16. hiſt. † Tom. 2.

out.

out. And there is one note amongſt the reſt, holineſs of doctrine, that is, ſo as to have nothing falſe either in *Doctrina fidei or morum*, (for ſo *Bellarmine* explicates it) which ſuppoſes all your controverſies judged, before they can be tried by the authority of the church, and when we have found out all true doctrine (for that is neceſſary to judge of the church by, that as St. *Auſtin*'s council is *Eccleſiam in verbis Chriſti inveſtigemus*) then we are bound to follow becauſe we judge it true, not becauſe the church hath ſaid it; and this is to judge of the church by her doctrine, not of the doctrine by the church. And indeed it is the beſt and only way; but then how to judge of that doctrine will be afterwards inquired into. In the mean time, the Church, that is, the governors of the churches are to judge for themſelves, and for thoſe who cannot judge for themſelves. For others they muſt know that their governors judge for them too, ſo as to keep them in peace and obedience, though not for the determination of their private perſuaſions. For the œconomy of the church requires that her authority be received by all her children. Now this authority is divine in its original, for it derives immediately from Chriſt, but it is human in its miniſtration. We are to be led like men not like beaſts; a rule is preſcribed for the guides themſelves to follow, as we are to follow the guides; and although in matters indeterminable, or ambiguous, the preſumption lies on behalf of the governors, (for we do nothing for authority, if we ſuffer it not to weigh that part down of an indifferency, and a queſtion which ſhe chooſes) yet if there be *error manifeſtus*, as it often happens, or if the church-governors themſelves be rent into innumerable ſects, as it is this day in Chriſtendom, then we are to be as wiſe as we can, in chuſing

our guides, and then to follow, ſo long as that reaſon remains for which we firſt choſe them. And even in that government which was an immediate ſanction of God, I mean the eccleſiaſtical government of the ſynagogue, where God had conſigned the high-prieſt's authority, with a menace of death to them that ſhould diſobey, that all the world might know the meaning and extent of ſuch precepts, and that there is a limit beyond which they cannot command, and we ought not to obey: it came once to that paſs, that if the prieſt had been obeyed in his conciliary decrees, the whole nation had been bound to believe the condemnation of our bleſſed Saviour to have been juſt, and at another time the Apoſtles muſt no more have preached in the name of JESUS. But here was manifeſt error. And the caſe is the ſame to every man that invincibly, and therefore innocently, believes it ſo. *Deo potius quam hominibus*, is our rule in ſuch caſes. For although every man is bound to follow his guide, unleſs he believes his guide to miſlead him; yet when he ſees reaſon againſt his guide, it is beſt to follow his reaſon: for though in this he may fall into error, yet he will eſcape the ſin; he may do violence to truth, but never to his own conſcience; and an honeſt error is better than an hypocritical profeſſion of truth, or a violent luxation of the underſtanding, ſince if he retains his honeſty and ſimplicity, he cannot err in a matter of faith or abſolute neceſſity: God's goodneſs hath ſecured all honeſt and careful perſons from that; for other things, he muſt follow the beſt guides he can, and he cannot be obliged to follow better than God hath given him.

III. And there is yet another way pretended of infallible expoſitions of ſcripture, and that is, by the Spirit. But of this I ſhall ſay no more, but that

that it is impertinent, as to this queſtion. For put the caſe, the Spirit is given to ſome men enabling them to expound infallibly, yet becauſe this is but a private aſſiſtance, and cannot be proved to others, this infallible aſſiſtance may determine my own aſſent, but ſhall not enable me to preſcribe to others, becauſe it were unreaſonable I ſhould, unleſs I could prove to him that I have the ſpirit, and ſo can ſecure him from being deceived, if he relies upon me. In this caſe I may ſay as St. *Paul*, in the caſe of praying with the ſpirit, *He verily giveth thanks well, but the other is not edified*. So that let this pretence be as true as it will, it is ſufficient that it cannot be of conſideration in this queſtion.

IV. The reſult of all is this; ſince it is not reaſonable to limit and preſcribe to all men's underſtandings by any external rule in the interpretation of difficult places of ſcripture, which is our rule: ſince no man, nor company of men, is ſecure from error, or can ſecure us that they are free from malice, intereſt and deſign; and ſince all the ways by which we uſually are taught, as tradition, councils, decretals, &c. are very uncertain in the matter, in their authority, in their being legitimate and natural, and many of them certainly falſe, and nothing certain but the divine authority of ſcripture, in which all that is neceſſary is plain, and much of that which is not neceſſary is very obſcure, intricate, and involved; either we muſt ſet up our reſt, only upon articles of faith, and plain places, and be incurious of other obſcurer revelations, (which is a duty for perſons of private underſtandings, and of no publick function) or if we ſearch further (to which in ſome meaſure the guides of others are obliged) it remains we enquire how men may determine themſelves, ſo as to do their duty to God, and

not to disserve the Church, that every such man may do what he is bound to, in his personal capacity, and as he relates to the publick, as a publick minister.

SECT. X.

Of the authority of Reason, and that It, *proceeding upon best grounds, is the best judge.*

I. HERE then I consider, that although no man may be trusted to judge for all others, unless this person was infallible and authorised so to do, which no man nor no company of men is; yet every man may be trusted to judge for himself: I say every man that can judge at all, (as for others, they are to be saved as it pleaseth God) but others that can judge at all, must either choose their guides who shall judge for them, (and then they oftentimes do the wisest, and always save themselves a labour, but then they chuse too) or if they be persons of greater understanding, then they are to chuse for themselves in particular, what the others do in general, and by chusing their guide; and for this any man may be better trusted for himself, than any man can be for another: For in this case his own interest is most concerned; and ability is not so necessary as honesty, which certainly every man will best preserve in his own case, and to himself, (and if he does not, it is he that must smart for it) and it is not required of us not to be in error, but that we endeavour to avoid it.

II. 2. He that follows his guide so far as his reason goes along with him, or which is all one, he that follows his own reason (not guided only by

by natural arguments, but by divine revelation, and all other good means) hath great advantages over him, that gives himſelf wholly to follow any human guide whatſoever, becauſe he follows all their reaſons and his own too; he follows them till reaſon leaves them, or till it ſeems ſo to him, which is all one to his particular, for by the confeſſion of all ſides, an erroneous conſcience binds him, when a right guide does not bind him. But he that gives himſelf up wholly to a guide is oftentimes (I mean, if he be a diſcerning perſon) forced to do violence to his own underſtanding, and to loſe all the benefit of his own diſcretion, that he may reconcile his reaſon to his guide. And of this we ſee infinite inconveniences in the church of *Rome*, for we find perſons of great underſtanding, oftentimes ſo amuſed with the authority of the church, that it is pity to ſee them ſweat in anſwering ſome objections, which they know not how to do, but yet believe they muſt, becauſe the church hath ſaid it. So that if they read, ſtudy, pray, ſearch records, and uſe all the means of art and induſtry in the purſuit of truth, it is not with a reſolution to follow that which ſhall ſeem truth to them, but to confirm what before they did believe: and if any argument ſhall ſeem unanſwerable againſt any article of their church, they are to take it for a temptation, not for an illumination, and they are to uſe it accordingly: which makes them make the Devil to be the author of that which God's ſpirit hath aſſiſted them to find in the uſe of lawful means and the ſearch of truth. And when the Devil of falſhood is like to be caſt out by God's ſpirit, they ſay that it is through *Beelzebub*; which was one of the worſt things that ever the phariſees ſaid or did: And was it not a plain ſtifling of the juſt and reaſonable demands made by the emperor,

peror, by the kings of *France* and *Spain*, and by the ableſt divines among them, which was uſed in the council of *Trent*, when they demanded the reſtitution of prieſts to their liberty of marriage, the uſe of the chalice, the ſervice in the vulgar tongue, and theſe things not only in purſuance of truth, but for other great and good ends, even to take away an infinite ſcandal and a great ſchiſm? And yet when they themſelves did profeſs it, and all the world knew theſe reaſonable demands were denied merely upon a politick conſideration, yet that theſe things ſhould be fram'd into articles, and decrees of faith, and they for ever after bound not only not to deſire the ſame things, but to think the contrary to be divine truths: never was reaſon made more a ſlave, or more uſeleſs. Muſt not all the world ſay, either they muſt be great hypocrites, or do great violence to their underſtanding, when they not only ceaſe from their claim, but muſt alſo believe it to be unjuſt? If the uſe of their reaſon had not been reſtrained by the tyranny and imperiouſneſs of their guide, what the emperor, and the kings, and their theologues would have done, they can beſt judge, who conſider the reaſonableneſs of the demand, and the unreaſonableneſs of the denial. But we ſee many wiſe men, who with their *Optandum eſſet ut Eccleſia licentiam daret, &c.* proclaim to all the world, that in ſome things they conſent and do not conſent, and do not heartily believe, what they are bound publickly to profeſs, and they themſelves would clearly ſee a difference, if a contrary decree ſhould be fram'd by the church, they would with an infinitely greater confidence reſt themſelves in other propoſitions, than what they muſt believe as the caſe now ſtands, and they would find that the authority of a church is a prejudice

Judice, as often as a free and modeſt uſe of reaſon is a temptation.

III. 3. God will have no man preſſed with anothers inconveniencies in matters ſpiritual and intellectual, no man's ſalvation to depend upon another, and every tooth that eats ſour grapes ſhall be ſet on edge for itſelf, and for none elſe: and this is remarkable in that ſaying of God by the prophet, * *If the prophet ceaſes to tell my people of their ſins, and leads them into error, the people ſhall die in their ſins, and the blood of them I will require at the hands of that prophet*: meaning, that God hath ſo ſet the prophets to guide us, that we alſo are to follow them by a voluntary aſſent, by an act of choice and election. For although, accidentally and occaſionally, the ſheep may periſh by the ſhepherd's fault, yet that which had the chiefeſt influence upon their final condition, is their own act and election; and therefore God hath ſo appointed guides to us, that if we periſh, it may be accounted upon both our ſcores, upon our own and the guides too, which ſays plainly, that although we are intruſted to our guides, yet we are intruſted to ourſelves too. Our guides muſt direct us; and yet if they fail, God hath not ſo left us to them, but he hath given us enough to ourſelves to diſcover their failings, and our own duties in all things neceſſary. And for other things we muſt do as well as we can. But it is beſt to follow our guides, if we know nothing better; but if we do, it is better to follow the pillar of fire, than a pillar of cloud, though both poſſibly may lead to *Canaan*: but then alſo it is poſſible that it may be otherwiſe. But I am ſure if I do my own beſt, then if it be beſt to follow a guide, and if it be alſo neceſſary, I ſhall be ſure by Gods grace and my own endeavour, to get to

* Ezek. 33.

it;

it; but if I without the particular engagement of my own underſtanding, follow a guide, poſſibly I may be guilty of extreme negligence, or I may extinguiſh God's ſpirit, or do violence to my own reaſon. And whether intruſting myſelf wholly with another, be not a laying up my talent in a napkin, I am not ſo well aſſured. I am certain the other is not. And ſince another man's anſwering for me will not hinder, but that I alſo ſhall anſwer for myſelf; as it concerns him to ſee he does not wilfully miſguide me, ſo it concerns me to ſee that he ſhall not, if I can help it, if I cannot it will not be required at my hands: whether it be his fault, or his invincible error, I ſhall be charg'd with neither.

IV. 4. This is no other, than what is enjoined as a duty. For ſince God will be juſtified with a free obedience, and there is an obedience of underſtanding, as well as of will and affection, it is of great concernment, as to be willing to believe whatever God ſays, ſo alſo to enquire diligently whether the will of God be ſo as is pretended. Even our acts of underſtanding are acts of choice, and therefore it is commanded as a duty, to * *ſearch the ſcriptures, to try the ſpirits whether they be of God or no, of ourſelves to be able to judge what is right, to try all things, and to retain that which is beſt.* For he that reſolves not to conſider, reſolves not to be careful whether he have truth or no, and therefore hath an affection indifferent to truth or falſhood, which is all one as if he did chuſe amiſs; and ſince when things are truly propounded and made reaſonable and intelligible we cannot but aſſent, and then it is no thanks to us; we have no way to give our wills to God in matters of belief,

* Mat. 15. 10. Joh. 5. 40. 1 Joh. 4. 1. Epheſ. 5. 17. Luk. 24. 25. Rom. 3. 11, 1. 18. Apoch. 2. 2. Act. 17. 11.

but

but by our induſtry in ſearching it and examining the grounds upon which the propounders build their dictates. And the not doing it is oftentimes a cauſe that God gives a man over εἰς νοῦν ἀδόκιμον, into a reprobate and *undiſcerning* mind and underſtanding.

V. 5. And this very thing (though men will not underſtand it) is the perpetual practice of all men in the world that can give a reaſonable account of their faith. The very catholic church itſelf is * *rationabilis & ubique diffuſa*, ſaith *Optatus*, reaſonable, as well as diffuſed, every where. For take the proſelytes of the church of *Rome*, even in their greateſt ſubmiſſion of underſtanding, they ſeem to themſelves to follow their reaſon moſt of all. For if you tell them, ſcripture and tradition are their rules to follow, they will believe you when they know a reaſon for it; and if they take you upon your word, they have a reaſon for that too, either they believe you a learned man, or a good man, or that you can have no ends upon them, or ſomething that is of an equal height to fit their underſtandings. If you tell them they muſt believe the church, you muſt tell them why they are bound to it; and if you quote ſcripture to prove it, you muſt give them leave to judge, whether the words alledged ſpeak your ſenſe or no, and therefore to diſſent, if they ſay no ſuch thing. And although all men are not wiſe, and proceed diſcreetly, yet all make their choice ſome way or other. He that chuſes to pleaſe his fancy, takes his choice as much, as he that chuſes prudently. And no man ſpeaks more unreaſonably, than he that denies to men the uſe of their reaſon in choice of their religion. For that I may by the way remove the common prejudice, reaſon

* Lib. 3.

and

and authority are not things incompetent or repugnant, eſpecially when the authority is infallible and ſupreme: for there is no greater reaſon in the world, than to believe ſuch an authority. But then we muſt conſider, whether every authority that pretends to be ſuch, is ſo indeed. And therefore *Deus dixit, ergo hoc verum eſt*, is the greateſt demonſtration in the world for things of this nature. But it is not ſo in human dictates, and yet reaſon and human authority are not enemies. For it is a good argument for us to follow ſuch an opinion, becauſe it is made ſacred by the authority of councils and eccleſiaſtical tradition, and ſometimes it is the beſt reaſon we have in a queſtion, and then it is to be ſtrictly followed; but there may alſo be at other times a reaſon greater than it that ſpeaks againſt it, and then the authority muſt not carry it. But then the difference is not between reaſon and authority, but between this reaſon and that, Which is greater: for authority is a very good reaſon, and is to prevail, unleſs a ſtronger come and diſarm it, but then it muſt give place. So that in this queſtion by [*Reaſon*] I do not mean a diſtinct topick, but a tranſcendent that runs through all topicks; for reaſon, like logick, is inſtrument of all things elſe; and when revelation, and philoſophy, and public experience, and all other grounds of probability or demonſtration have ſupplied us with matter, then reaſon does but make uſe of them; that is, in plain terms, there being ſo many ways of arguing, ſo many ſects, ſuch differing intereſts, ſuch variety of authority, ſo many pretences, and ſo many falſe beliefs, it concerns every wiſe man to conſider which is the beſt argument, which propoſition relies upon the trueſt grounds: and if this were not his only way, why do men diſpute and urge arguments, why do they cite councils

cils and fathers, why do they alledge ſcripture and tradition, and all this on all ſides, and to contrary purpoſes? If we muſt judge, then we muſt uſe our reaſon; if we muſt not judge, why do they produce evidence? Let them leave diſputing and decree propoſitions magiſterially, but then we may chuſe whether we will believe them or no; or if they ſay we muſt believe them, they muſt prove it, and tell us why. And all theſe diſputes concerning tradition, councils, fathers, &c. are not arguments againſt or beſides reaſon, but conteſtations and pretences to the beſt arguments, and the moſt certain ſatisfaction of our reaſon. But then all theſe coming into queſtion, ſubmit themſelves to reaſon, that is, to be judged by human underſtanding, upon the beſt grounds and information it can receive. So that ſcripture, tradition, councils, and fathers, are *the evidence in a queſtion, but reaſon is the judge:* that is, we being the perſons that are to be perſuaded, we muſt ſee that we be perſuaded reaſonably, and it is unreaſonable to aſſent to a leſſer evidence, when a greater and clearer is propounded; but of that every man for himſelf is to take cognizance, if he be able to judge, if he be not, he is not bound under the tie of neceſſity to know any thing of it; that which is neceſſary ſhall be certainly conveyed to him, God that beſt can, will certainly take care for that; for if he does not, it becomes to be not neceſſary; or if it ſhould ſtill remain neceſſary, and he damned for not knowing it, and yet to know it be not in his power, then who can help it? there can be no further care in this buſineſs. In other things, there being no abſolute and prime neceſſity, we are left to our liberty to judge that way, which makes beſt demonſtration of our piety and of our love to God and truth, not that way that is always the beſt argument of an excellent

cellent underſtanding, for this may be a bleſſing, but the other only is a duty.

And now that we are pitched upon that way which is moſt natural and reaſonable in determination of ourſelves rather than of queſtions, which are often indeterminable, ſince right reaſon proceeding upon the beſt grounds it can, *viz.* of divine revelation and human authority, and probability is our guide, (*Stando in humanis*) and ſuppoſing the aſſiſtance of God's ſpirit (which he never denies them that fail not of their duty in all ſuch things in which he requires truth and certainty) it remains that we conſider how it comes to paſs that men are ſo much deceived in the uſe of their reaſon, and choice of their religion, and that in this account we diſtinguiſh thoſe accidents which make error innocent, from thoſe which make it become a hereſy.

SECT. XI.

Of ſome cauſes of Error in the exerciſe of Reaſon which are inculpate in themſelves.

1. WHEN I conſider, that there are a great many inculpable cauſes of error, which are arguments of human imperfection, not convictions of a ſin. And (1.) the variety of human underſtandings is ſo great, that what is plain and apparent to one, is difficult and obſcure to another; one will obſerve a conſequent from a common principle, and another from thence will conclude the quite contrary. When St. *Peter* ſaw the viſion of the ſheet let down with all ſorts of beaſts in it, and a voice ſaying, *Surge Petre, macta & manduca*, if he had not by a particular aſſiſtance

aſſiſtance been directed to the meaning of the holy ghoſt, poſſibly he might have had other apprehenſions of the meaning of that viſion, for to myſelf it ſeems naturally to ſpeak nothing but the abolition of the Moſaical rites, and the reſtitution of us to that part of chriſtian liberty which conſiſts in the promiſcuous eating of meats; and yet beſides this, there want not ſome underſtandings in the world, to whom theſe words ſeem to give St. *Peter* a power to kill heretical princes. Methinks it is a ſtrange underſtanding that makes ſuch extractions, but *Bozius* and *Baronius* did ſo. But men may underſtand what they pleaſe, eſpecially when they are to expound oracles. It was an argument of ſome wit, but of ſingularity of underſtanding, that happened in the great conteſtation between the Miſſals of St. *Ambroſe* and St. *Gregory*. The lot was thrown, and God made to be judge, ſo as he was tempted to a miracle, to anſwer a queſtion which themſelves might have ended without much trouble. The two Miſſals were laid upon the altar, and the church door ſhut and ſealed. By the morrow mattins they found St. *Gregory*'s miſſall torn in pieces (ſaith the ſtory) and thrown about the church, but St. *Ambroſe*'s opened and laid upon the altar in a poſture of being read. If I had been to judge of the meaning of this miracle, I ſhould have made no ſcruple to have ſaid it had been the will of God that the Miſſal of St. *Ambroſe* which had been anciently uſed, and publickly tried and approved of, ſhould ſtill be read in the church, and that of *Gregory* let alone, it being torn by an angelical hand as an argument of its imperfection, or of the inconvenience of innovation. But yet they judged it otherwiſe, for by the tearing and ſcattering about, they thought it was meant, it ſhould be uſed over all the world, and that of St. *Ambroſe* read

only in the in the church of *Millaine*. I am more ſatisfied that the former was the true meaning, than I am of the truth of the ſtory: But we muſt ſuppoſe that. And now there might have been eternal diſputings about the meaning of the miracle, and nothing left to determine, when two fancies are the litigants, and the conteſtations about probabilites *hinc inde*. And I doubt not this was one cauſe of ſo great variety of opinions in the primitive church, when they proved their ſeveral opinions, which were myſterious queſtions of chriſtian theology, by teſtimonies out of the obſcurer prophets, out of the pſalms and canticles, as who pleaſe to obſerve their arguments of diſcourſe and actions of council ſhall perceive they very much uſed to do. Now although men's underſtandings be not equal, and that it is fit the beſt underſtandings ſhould prevail; yet that will not ſatisfy the weaker underſtandings, becauſe all men will not think that another underſtanding is better than his own, at leaſt not in ſuch a particular, in which with fancy he hath pleaſed himſelf. But commonly they that are leaſt able, are moſt bold, and the more ignorant is the more confident; therefore it is but reaſon, if he would have another bear with him, he alſo ſhould bear with another; and if he will not be preſcribed to, neither let him preſcribe to others. And there is the more reaſon in this, becauſe ſuch modeſty is commonly to be deſired of the more imperfect; for wiſe men know the ground of their perſuaſion, and have their confidence proportionable to their evidence, others have not, but over-act their trifles; and therefore I ſaid it is but a reaſonable demand, that they who have the leaſt reaſon ſhould not be moſt imperious; and for others it being reaſonable enough, for all their great advantages upon other men, they will be ſoon perſuaded to it; for although

although wiſe men might be bolder, in reſpect of the perſons of others leſs diſcerning, yet they know there are but few things ſo certain as to create much boldneſs and confidenee of aſſertion; if they do not, they are not the men I take them for.

II. 2. When an action or opinion is commenced with zeal and piety againſt a known vice or a vicious perſon, commonly all miſtakes of it's proceeding are made ſacred by the holineſs of the principle, and ſo abuſe the perſuaſions of good people, that they make it as a characteriſtick note to diſtinguiſh good perſons from bad; and then whatever error is conſecrated by this means, is therefore made the more laſting, becauſe it is accounted holy, and the perſons are not eaſily accounted hereticks, becauſe they erred upon a pious principle. There is a memorable inſtance in one of the greateſt queſtions of Chriſtendom, *viz.* concerning *Images*. For when *Philippicus* had eſpyed the *Images* of the ſix firſt ſynods upon the front of a church, he cauſed them to be pulled down; now he did it in hatred of the ſixth ſynod: for he being a Monothelite, ſtood condemned by that ſynod. The Catholicks that were zealous for the ſixth ſynod, cauſed the images and repreſentments to be put up again, and then ſprung the queſtion concerning the lawfulneſs of images in churches; *Philippicus* and his party ſtrived by ſuppreſſing images to do diſparagement to the ſixth ſynod: the * catholicks to preſerve the honour of the ſixth ſynod, would uphold images. And then the queſtion came to be changed, and they who were eaſy enough to be perſuaded to pull down images, were overawed by a prejudice againſt the *Monothelites*, and

* Vid. Paulum Diaconum.

the *Monothelites* ſtrived to maintain the advantage they had got by a juſt and pious pretence againſt images. The *Monothelites* would have ſecured their error by the advantage and conſociation of a truth, and the other would rather defend a dubious and diſputable error, than loſe and let go a certain truth. And thus the caſe ſtood, and the ſucceſſors of both parts were led invincibly. For when the hereſy of the *Monothelites* diſbanded, (which it did in a while after) yet the opinion of the *Iconoclaſts*, and the queſtion of images grew ſtronger. Yet ſince the *Iconoclaſts* at firſt were hereticks, not for their breaking images, but for denying the two wills of Chriſt, his divine and his human: that they were called *Iconoclaſts* was to diſtinguiſh their opinion in the queſtion concerning the images, but that then *Iconoclaſts* ſo eaſily had the reputation of hereticks, was becauſe of the other opinion which was conjunct in their perſons; which opinion men afterwards did not eaſily diſtinguiſh in them, but took them for hereticks in groſs, and whatſoever they held to be heretical. And thus upon this prejudice grew great advantages to the veneration of images, and the perſons at firſt were much to be excuſed, becauſe they were miſguided by that which might have abuſed the beſt men. And if *Epiphanius* who was as zealous againſt images in churches as *Philippicus* or *Leo Iſaurus*, had but begun a public conteſtation, and engaged emperors to have made decrees againſt them, Chriſtendom would have had other apprehenſions of it, than they had when the *Monothelites* began it. For few men will endure a truth from the mouth of the devil, and if the perſon be ſuſpected, ſo are his ways too. And it is a greatly ſubtlety of the devil ſo to temper truth and falſhood in the ſame perſon, that truth may loſe much of its reputation by its

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mixture with error, and the error may become more plauſible by reaſon of its conjunction with truth. And this we ſee by too much experience, for we ſee many truths are blaſted in their reputation, becauſe perſons, whom we think we hate upon juſt grounds of religion, have taught them. And it was plain enough in the caſe of * *Maldonat*, who ſaid of an explication of a place of ſcripture, that it was moſt agreeable to antiquity, but becauſe *Calvin* had ſo expounded it, he therefore choſe a new one. This was malice. But when a prejudice works tacitly, undiſcernably, and irreſiſtably of the perſon ſo wrought upon, the Man is to be pitied, not condemned, though poſſibly his Opinion deſerves it highly. And therefore it hath been uſual to diſcredit doctrines by the perſonal defaillances of them that preach them; or with the diſreputation of that ſect which maintains them in conjunction with other perverſe doctrines. *Fauſtus* the Manichee in † St. *Auſtin*, glories much, that in their religion God was worſhipped purely and without images. St. *Auſtin* liked it well, for ſo it was in his too; but from hence *Sanders* concludes, that to pull down images in churches was the hereſy of the Manichees. The Jews endure no images; therefore *Bellarmine* makes it a piece of judaiſm to oppoſe them. He might as well have concluded againſt ſaying our prayers, and church muſick, that it is ‡ judaical, becauſe the jews uſed it. And he would be loath to be ſerved ſo himſelf; for he that had a mind to uſe ſuch arguments, might with much better propriety conclude againſt their ſacrament of Extreme Unction, becauſe when the miraculous healing was ceaſed, then they were not catholicks, but here-

* In cap. 6. Joh. † L. 20. c. 3. cont. Fauſtum Man. L. 1. c. ult. de Imagin. ‡ De reliq. SS. l. 2. c. 18. Sect. Nicolaus.

ticks that did transfer it to the uſe of dying perſons, (ſays * *Irenæus*;) for ſo did the Valentinians: And indeed this argument is ſomething better than I thought for at firſt, becauſe it was in *Irenæus*'s time reckoned among the hereſies. But there are a ſort of men that are even with them, and hate ſome good things which the church of *Rome* teaches, becauſe ſhe who teaches ſo many errors, hath been the publiſher, and is the practiſer of thoſe things. I confeſs the thing is always unreaſonable, but ſometimes it is invincible and innocent; and then may ſerve to abate the fury of all ſuch decretory ſentences, as condemn all the world but their own diſciples.

III. 3. There are ſome opinions that have gone hand in hand with a bleſſing, and a proſperous profeſſion; and the good ſucceſs of their defenders hath amuſed many good people, becauſe they thought they heard God's voice where they ſaw God's hand, and therefore have ruſhed upon ſuch opinions with great piety and as great miſtaking. For where they once had entertained a fear of God, and apprehenſion of his ſo ſenſible declaration, ſuch a fear produces ſcruple, and a ſcrupulous conſcience is always to be pitied, becauſe though it be ſeldom wiſe, it is always pious. And this very thing hath prevailed ſo far upon the underſtandings even of wiſe men, that *Bellarmine* makes it a note of the true church. Which opinion, when it prevails, is a ready way to make, that inſtead of martyrs, all men ſhould prove hereticks or apoſtates, in perſecution; for ſince men in miſery are very ſuſpicious, out of ſtrong deſires to find out the cauſe, that by removing it they may be relieved, they apprehend that to be it, which is firſt preſented to their fears; and then if

* Lib. 1. cap. 8. adv. hæreſ.

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even truth be afflicted, she shall also be destroyed. I will say nothing in defiance of this fancy, although all the experience in the world says it is false, and that of all men christians should least believe it to be true, to whom a perpetual cross is their certain expectation, (and the argument is like the moon, for which no garment can be fit, it alters according to the success of human affairs, and in one age will serve a papist, and in another a protestant) yet when such an opinion does prevail upon timorous persons, the malignity of their error (if any be consequent to this fancy, and taken up from the reputation of a prosperous heresy) is not to be considered simply and nakedly, but abatement is to be made in a just proportion to that fear, and to that apprehension.

IV. 4. Education is so great and so invincible a prejudice, that he who masters the inconvenience of it, is more to be commended, than he can justly be blamed that complies with it. For men do not always call them principles which are the prime fountains of reason, from whence such consequents naturally flow, as are to guide the actions and discourses of men; but they are principles which they are first taught, which they sucked in next to their milk, and by a proportion to those first principles they usually take their estimate of propositions. For whatsoever is taught to them at first, they believe infinitely, for they know nothing to the contrary; they have had no other masters, whose theorems might abate the strength of their first persuasions, and it is a great advantage in those cases to get possession; and before their first principles can be dislodg'd, they are made habitual and complexional; it is in their nature then to believe them, and this is helped forward very much by the advantage of love and veneration, which we have to the first parents of

our perſuaſions. And we ſee it in the orders of Regulars in the church of *Rome*. That opinion, which was the opinion of their patron or founder, or of ſome eminent perſonage of the inſtitute, is enough to engage all the order to be of that opinion; and it is ſtrange that all the Dominicans ſhould be of one opinion in the matter of predetermination and immaculate conception, and all the Franciſcans of the quite contrary; as if their underſtandings were form'd in a different mould, and furniſhed with various principles by their very rule. Now this prejudice works by many principles, but how ſtrongly they do poſſeſs the underſtanding is viſible, in that great inſtance of the affection and perfect perſuaſion the weaker ſort of people have, to that which they call the religion of their forefathers. * You may as well charm a fever aſleep with the noiſe of bells, as make any pretence of reaſon againſt that religion, which old men have entail'd upon their heirs male, ſo many generations till they can preſcribe. And the apoſtles found this to be moſt true in the extremeſt difficulty they met with, to conteſt againſt the rites of *Moſes*, and the long ſuperſtition of the gentiles, which they therefore thought fit to be retain'd, becauſe they had done ſo formerly, *Pergentes non quo eundum eſt, ſed quo itur*, and all the bleſſings of this life which God gave them, they had in conjunction with their religion, and therefore they believed it was for their religion, and this perſuaſion was bound faſt in them with ribs of iron, the apoſtles were forc'd to unlooſe the whole conjuncture of parts and principles in their underſtandings, before they could make

* *Optima rati ea quæ magno aſſenſu recepta ſunt, quorumque exempla multa ſunt, nec ad rationem, ſed ad ſimilitudinem vivimus.* Sen. Vid. Minut. Pel. octav.

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them malleable, and receptive of any impreſſes. But the obſervation and experience of all wiſe men can juſtify this truth. All that I ſhall ſay to the preſent purpoſe, is this, that conſideration is to be had to the weakneſs of perſons, when they are prevail'd upon by ſo innocent a prejudice, and when there cannot be arguments ſtrong enough to over-maſter an habitual perſuaſion bred with a man, nouriſh'd up with him, that always eat at his table, and lay in his boſom, he is not eaſily to be called heretick; for if he keep the foundation of faith, other articles are not ſo clearly demonſtrated on either ſide, but that a man may innocently be abuſed to the contrary. And therefore in this caſe to handle him charitably, is but to do him juſtice: and when an opinion *in minoribus articulis*, is entertain'd upon the title and ſtock of education, it may be the better permitted to him, ſince upon no better ſtock nor ſtronger arguments, moſt men entertain their whole religion, even chriſtianity itſelf.

V. 5. There are ſome perſons of a differing perſuaſion, who therefore are the rather to be tolerated, becauſe the indirect practices and impoſtures of their adverſaries have confirmed them, that thoſe opinions which they diſavow, are not from God, as being upheld by means not of God's appointment: for it is no unreaſonable diſcourſe to ſay, that God will not be ſerved with a lie, for he does not need one, and he hath means enough to ſupport all thoſe truths which he hath commanded, and hath ſupplied every honeſt cauſe with enough for its maintenance, and to conteſt againſt its adverſaries. And (but that they who uſe indirect arts will not be willing to loſe any of their unjuſt advantages, nor yet be charitable to thoſe perſons, whom either to gain or to undo, they leave nothing unattempted) the church of

Rome

Rome hath much reaſon not to be ſo decretory in her ſentences againſt perſons of a differing perſuaſion: for if their cauſe were entirely the cauſe of God, they have given wiſe people reaſon to ſuſpect it, becauſe ſome of them have gone to the devil to defend it. And if it be remembered what tragedies were ſtirred up againſt *Luther*, for ſaying, the devil had taught him an argument againſt the maſs, it will be of as great advantage againſt them, that they go to the devil for many arguments to ſupport not only the maſs, but the other diſtinguiſhing articles of their church: I inſtance in the notorious forging of miracles, and framing of falſe and ridiculous legends. For the former I need no other inſtances, than what happened in the great conteſtation about the immaculate conception, when there were miracles brought on both ſides to prove the contradictory parts; and though it may be more than probable that both ſides play'd the jugglers, yet the Dominicans had the ill luck to be diſcovered, and the actors burn'd at *Berne*. But this diſcovery happened by providence; for the Dominican opinion hath more degrees of probability than the Franciſcan; is clearly more conſonant both to ſcripture and all antiquity, and this part of it is acknowledged by the greateſt patrons themſelves, as Salmeron, Poſa and Wadding: yet becauſe they played the knaves in a juſt queſtion, and uſed falſe arts to maintain a true propoſition, God almighty, to ſhew that he will not be ſerved by a lye, was pleaſed rather to diſcover the impoſture in the right opinion than in the falſe: ſince nothing is more diſhonourable to God, then to offer a ſin in ſacrifice to him, and nothing more incongruous in the nature of the thing, than that truth and falſhood ſhould ſupport each other, or that true doctrine ſhould live at the charges of a lye. And he that conſiders the arguments

arguments for each opinion will eaſily conclude, that if God would not have truth confirmed by a lye, much leſs would he himſelf atteſt a lye with a true miracle. And by this ground it will eaſily follow, that the Franciſcan party, although they had better luck then the Dominicans, yet had not more honeſty, becauſe their cauſe was worſe, and therefore their arguments no whit the better. And although the argument drawn from miracles is good to atteſt a holy doctrine, which by its own worth will ſupport itſelf, after way is a little made by miracles, yet of itſelf and by its own reputation it will not ſupport any fabrick; for inſtead of proving a doctrine to be true, it makes that the miracles themſelves are ſuſpected to be illuſions, if they be pretended in behalf of a doctrine, which we think we have reaſon to account falſe. And therefore the Jews did not believe Chriſt's doctrine for his miracles, but diſbelieved the truth of his miracles, becauſe they did not like his doctrine. And if the holineſs of his doctrine, and the ſpirit of God by inſpirations and infuſions, and by that which Saint *Peter* calls *a ſurer word of propheſy*, had not atteſted the divinity both of his perſon and his office, we ſhould have wanted many degrees of confidence which now we have upon the truth of chriſtian religion. But now ſince we are foretold by this * *ſurer word of propheſy*, that is, the prediction of Jeſus Chriſt, that Antichriſt ſhould come in all wonders, and ſigns, and lying miracles, and that the church ſaw much of that already verified in *Simon Magus*, *Apollonius Tyaneus*, and *Manetho*, and divers † hereticks, it is now come to that paſs, that the argument in

* Vid. Baron. Æ. D. 68. n. 22. Philoſtrat. l. 4. T. 485. compend. Cedren. p. 202. † Stapleton. prompt. Moral. pars æſtiva, p. 627.

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its beſt advantage proves nothing ſo much, as that the doctrine, which it pretends to prove, is to be ſuſpected; becauſe it was foretold, that falſe doctrine ſhould be obtruded under ſuch pretences. But then when not only true miracles are an inſufficient argument to prove a truth ſince the eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity, but that the miracles themſelves are falſe and ſpurious, it makes that doctrine in whoſe defence they come, juſtly to be ſuſpected, becauſe they are a demonſtration that the intereſted perſons uſe all means, leave nothing unattempted to prove their propoſitions; but ſince they ſo fail as to bring nothing from God, but ſomething from the devil, for its juſtification, it's a great ſign that the doctrine is falſe, becauſe we know the devil, unleſs it be againſt his will, does nothing to prove a true propoſition that makes againſt him. And now then thoſe perſons who will endure no man of another opinion, might do well to remember how by their exorciſms, their devils tricks at *Lowdon*, and the other ſide pretending to cure mad folks and perſons bewitched, and the many diſcoveries of their jugling, they have given ſo much reaſon to their adverſaries to ſuſpect their doctrine, that either they muſt not be ready to condemn their perſons, who are made ſuſpicious, by their indirect; proceeding in atteſtation of that, which they value ſo high as to call their religion; or elſe they muſt condemn themſelves for making the ſcandal active and effectual.

VI. As for falſe *Legends*, it will be of the ſame conſideration, becauſe they are falſe teſtimonies of miracles that were never done; which differs only from the other as a lye in words from a lye in action: but of this we have witneſs enough in that decree of pope *Leo* X. ſeſſion the eleventh, of the laſt Lateran council, where he excommunicates all the forgers and inventors of viſions and

falſe

falſe miracles; which is a teſtimony, that it was then a practice ſo public, as to need a law for its ſuppreſſion: and if any man ſhall doubt whether it were ſo or not, let him ſee the *Centum gravamina* of the princes of *Germany*, where it is highly complain'd of. But the extreme ſtupidity and ſottiſhneſs of the inventors of lying ſtories is ſo great, as to give occaſion to ſome perſons to ſuſpect the truth of all church * ſtory: witneſs the legend of *Lombardy*: of the author of which the biſhop of the *Canaries* gives this teſtimony, *In illo enim libro miraculorum monſtra ſæpius quam vera miracula legas. Hunc homo ſcripſit ferrei oris, plumbei cordis, animi certe parum ſeveri & prudentis.* But I need not deſcend ſo low; for St. † *Gregory* and *V. Bede* themſelves reported miracles, for the authority of which they only had the report of the common people: and it is not certain that St. ‡ *Hierome* had ſo much in his ſtories of St. *Paul* and St. *Anthony*, and the *Fauns* and the *Satyrs* which appear'd to them, and deſir'd their prayers. But I ſhall only, by way of eminency, note what Sir *Thomas More* ſays in his epiſtle to *Ruthal* the kings ſecretary, before the dialogue of *Lucian* [*Philopſeudes*] that therefore he undertook the tranſlation of that dialogue, to free the world from a ſuperſtition, that crept in under the face and title of religion. For ſuch lyes (ſays he) are tranſmitted to us with ſuch authority, that a certain impoſtor had perſuaded St. *Auſtin*, that the very fable which *Lucian* ſcoffs, and makes ſport withal in that § dialogue, was a real ſtory, and acted in his own days. The

* Τὰ γαρ μη εἰρημενα ἐκδιαζομενοι, ϗ τα ἀδιαστως εἰρημενα ὑποπτευεσθαι παρασκευαζουσιν. Iſid. Pelus. † Vid. l. 11. loc. Theol. cap. 6. ‡ Canus ibid. § Viz. *De duobus ſpuniis, altero decedente, altero in vitam redeunte poſt viginti dies; quam in aliis nominibus ridet Lucianus. Vide etiam argumentum Gilberti cognati, in Annotat. in hunc Dialog.*

epiſtle

epiſtle is worth the reading to this purpoſe; but he ſays this abuſe grew to ſuch a height, that ſcarce any life of any ſaint or martyr is truly related, but is full of lyes and lying wonders, and ſome perſons thought they ſerved God, if they did honour to God's ſaints, by inventing ſome prodigious ſtory, or miracle for their reputation. So that now it is no wonder if the moſt pious men are apt to believe, and the greateſt hiſtorians are eaſy enough to report ſuch ſtories; which ſerving to a good end, are alſo conſigned by the report of perſons, otherwiſe pious and prudent enough. I will not inſtance in * *Vincentius* his *ſpeculum*, *Turonenſis*, *Thomas Cantipratanus*, *John Herolt*, *Vitæ Patrum*, nor the revelations of St. *Bridget* though confirmed by two popes, *Martin* V. and *Boniface* IX. even the beſt and moſt deliberate amongſt them, *Lippoman*, *Surius*, *Lipſius Bzovius*, and *Baronius* are ſo full of fables, that they cauſe great diſrepute to the other monuments and records of antiquity, yet do no advantage to the cauſe under which they ſerve and take pay. They do no good and much hurt; but yet accidentally they may procure this advantage to charity, ſince they do none to faith; that ſince they have ſo abuſed the credit of ſtory, that our confidences want much of that ſupport, we ſhould receive from her records of antiquity, yet the men that diſſent and are ſcandaliz'd by ſuch proceedings ſhould be excuſed, if they ſhould chance to be afraid of truth, that hath put on garments of impoſture: and ſince much violence is done to the *truth and certainty* of their judging, let none be done to their *liberty* of judging: ſince they cannot meet a right guide, let them have a charitable judge. And ſince it is one very great argument againſt *Simon Magus* and

* Vid. Palæot. de ſacra ſindone, part. 1. Epiſt. ad Lector.

againſt

against *Mahomet*, that we can prove their miracles to be impostures, it is much to be pitied if timorous and suspicious persons shall invincibly and honestly less apprehend a truth, which they see conveyed by such a testimony, which we all use as an argument to reprove the Mahometan superstition.

VII. 6. Here also come in all the weaknesses and trifling prejudices which operate not by their own strength, but by advantage taken from the weakness of some understandings. Some men by a proverb or a common saying are determin'd to the belief of a proposition, for which they have no argument better than such a proverbial sentence. And when divers of the common people in *Jerusalem* were ready to yield their understandings to the belief of the Messias, they were turn'd clearly from their apprehensions by that proverb, *look and see, does any good thing come from Galilee?* And this, *when Christ comes, no man knows from whence he is*; but this man was known of what parents, of what city. And thus the weakness of their understanding was abused, and that made the argument too hard for them. And the whole seventh chapter of St. *John*'s gospel is a perpetual instance of the efficacy of such trifling prejudices, and the vanity and weakness of popular understandings. Some whole ages have been abused by a definition, which being once received, as most commonly they are upon slight grounds, they are taken for certainties in any science respectively, and for principles, and upon their reputation men use to frame conclusions, which must be false or uncertain according as the definitions are. And he that hath observ'd any thing of the weaknesses of men, and the successions of groundless doctrines

* Joh. 7.

from

from age to age, and how ſeldom definitions which are put into ſyſtems, or that derive from the fathers, or approved among ſchoolmen are examined by perſons of the ſame intereſts, will bear me witneſs, how many and great inconveniences preſs hard upon the perſuaſions of men, who are abuſed, and yet never conſider who hurt them. Others, and they very many, are lead by authority or examples of princes, and great perſonages, * *Num quis credit ex principibus?* Some, by the reputation of one learned man, are carried into any perſuaſion whatſoever. And in the middle and later ages of the church, this was the more conſiderable, becauſe the infinite ignorance of the clerks, and the men of the long robe, gave them over to be led by thoſe few guides which were mark'd to them by an eminency, much more than their ordinary; which alſo did the more amuſe them, becauſe moſt commonly they were fit for nothing but to admire what they underſtood not; their learning then was in ſome ſkill in the maſter of the ſentences, in *Aquinas* or *Scotus*, whom they admir'd next to the moſt intelligent order of angels; hence came opinions that made ſects and diviſion of names, Thomiſts, Scotiſts, Albertiſts, Reals, and I know not what monſters of names; and whole families of the ſame opinion, the whole inſtitute of an order being engag'd to believe according to the opinion of ſome leading man of the ſame order, as if ſuch an opinion were impoſed upon them *in virtute ſanctæ obedientiæ*. But this inconvenience is greater when the principle of the miſtake runs higher, when the opinion is deriv'd from a primitive man and a ſaint, for then it often happens, that what at firſt was but a plain innocent ſeduction, comes to be made ſacred by the veneration which is conſequent to the perſon for having lived long agone; and then, becauſe the

the perſon is alſo ſince canonized, the error is almoſt made eternal, and the cure deſperate. Theſe and the like prejudices which are as various as the miſeries of humanity or the variety of human underſtandings are not abſolute excuſes, unleſs to ſome perſons; but truly if they be to any, they are exemptions to all, from being preſſed with too peremptory a ſentence againſt them, eſpecially if we conſider what leave is given to all men by the church of *Rome* to follow any one probable doctor in an opinion which is proteſted againſt by many more. And as for the doctors of the other ſide, they being deſtitute of any pretences to an infallible *medium* to determine queſtions, muſt of neceſſity allow the ſame liberty to the people, to be as prudent as they can in the choice of a fallible guide; and when they have choſen, if they do follow him into error, the matter is not ſo inexpiable for being deceived in uſing the beſt guides we had, which guides becauſe themſelves were abuſed, did alſo againſt their wills deceive me. So that this prejudice may the eaſier abuſe us, becauſe it is almoſt like a duty to follow the dictates of a probable doctor; or if it be overacted or accidentally paſs into an inconvenience, it is therefore to be excuſed becauſe the principle was not ill, unleſs we judge by the event, not by the antecedent probability. Of ſuch men as theſe it was ſaid by St. * *Auſtin*, *Cæteram turbam non intelligendi vivacitas, ſed credendi ſimplicitas tutiſſimam facit.* And *Gregory Nazianzen*, † σωζει πολλαχις τον λαον το ἀβασανιστον. The common ſort of people are ſafe in their not inquiring by their own induſtry, and in the ſimplicity of their underſtanding, relying upon the beſt guides they can get.

* Contr. Fund. c. 4. † Orat. 21.

But this is of ſuch a nature, in which as we may inculpably be deceived, ſo we may turn it into a vice or a deſign, and then the conſequent errors will alter the property, and become hereſies. There are ſome men that have *mens perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage, and ſome that have itching ears, and heap up teachers to themſelves.* In theſe and the like caſes the authority of a perſon, and the prejudice of a great reputation is not the excuſe but the fault: And a ſin is ſo far from excuſing an error, that error becomes a ſin by reaſon of it's relation to that ſin, as to it's parent and principle.

SECT. XII.

Of the innocency of Error in opinion in a pious perſon.

I. AND therefore as there are ſo many innocent cauſes of error, as there are weakneſſes within, and harmleſs and unavoidable prejudices from without; ſo, if ever error be procured by a vice, it hath no excuſe, but becomes ſuch a crime, of ſo much malignity, as to have influence upon the effect and conſequent, and by communication makes it become criminal. The apoſtles noted two ſuch cauſes: *covetouſneſs* and *ambition*, the former in them of the circumciſion, and the latter in *Diotrephes* and *Simon Magus*; and there were ſome that were * ἀγόμενοι ἐπιθυμίαις ποικίλαις, they were of the long robe too, but they were the ſhe-diſciples, upon whoſe conſciences ſome falſe apoſtles had influence by advantage of their wantonneſs, and thus the three

* 2 Tim. 3.

principles

principles of all ſin become alſo the principles of hereſy, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life. And in purſuance of theſe arts the devil hath not wanted fuel to ſet to work incendiaries, in all ages of the church. The biſhops were always honourable, and moſt commonly had great revenues; and a biſhoprick would ſatisfy the two deſigns of covetouſneſs and ambition, and this hath been the golden apple very often contended for, and very often the cauſe of great fires in the church. *Thebulis quia rejectus ab Epiſcopatu Hieroſolymitano, turbare cœpit Eccleſiam*, ſaid *Egeſippus* in *Euſebius*. *Tertullian* turn'd Montaniſt in diſcontent for miſſing the biſhoprick of *Carthage* after *Agrippinus*; and ſo did *Montanus* himſelf for the ſame diſcontent, ſaith *Nicephorus*. *Novatus* would have been biſhop of *Rome*, *Donatus* of *Carthage*, *Arrius* of *Alexandria*, *Aerius* of *Sebaſtia*, but they all miſſed, and therefore all of them vexed Chriſtendom. And this was ſo common a thing, that oftentimes, the threatning the church with a ſchiſm, or a hereſy, was a deſign to get a biſhoprick; and *Socrates* reports of *Aſterius*, that he did frequent the conventicles of the Arrians; *Nam Epiſcopatum aliquem ambiebat*. And ſetting aſide the infirmities of men, and their innocent prejudices, *Epiphanius* makes pride to be the only cauſe of hereſies, ὕβρις καὶ προκριτις, pride and prejudice cauſe them all, the one criminally, the other innocently. And indeed St. *Paul* does almoſt make pride the only cauſe of hereſies; his words cannot be expounded, unleſs it be at leaſt the principal, εἴ τις ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖ, *and conſents not to ſound words, and the doctrine that is according to godlineſs*; τετύφωται μηδὲν ἐπιστάμενος, ἀλλὰ νοσῶν περὶ ζητήσεις καὶ λογομαχίας, ἐξ ὧν γίνεται φθόνος, ἔρις, βλασφημίαι, ὑπόνοιαι πονηραί.

The ſum is this, If ever an opinion be begun with pride, or managed with impiety, or end in a crime, the man turns heretick: but let the error be never ſo great, ſo it be not againſt an article of creed, if it be ſimple and hath no confederation with the perſonal iniquity of the man, the opinion is as innocent as the perſon, though perhaps as falſe as he is ignorant, and therefore ſhall burn though he himſelf eſcape. But in theſe caſes and many more, (for the cauſes of deception increaſe by all accidents, and weakneſſes, and illuſions) no man can give certain judgment upon the perſons of men in particular, unleſs the matter of fact and crime be accident and notorious. The man cannot by human judgment be concluded a heretick, unleſs his opinion be an open receſſion from plain demonſtrative divine authority (which muſt needs be notorious, voluntary, vincible, and criminal) or that there be a palpable ſerving of an end, accidental, and extrinſical to the opinion.

But this latter is very hard to be diſcerned, becauſe thoſe accidental and adherent crimes which make the man a heretick, in queſtions not ſimply fundamental or of neceſſary practice, are actions ſo internal and ſpiritual, that cognizance can but ſeldom be taken of them. And therefore (to inſtance) though the opinion of purgatory be falſe, yet to believe it cannot be hereſy, if a man be abuſed into the belief of it invincibly; becauſe it is not a doctrine either fundamentally falſe, or practically impious; it neither proceeds from the will, nor hath any immediate or direct influence upon choice and manners. And as for thoſe other ends of upholding that opinion, which poſſibly its patrons may have, as for the reputation of their church's infallibility, for the advantage of dirges, requiems, maſſes, monthly minds, anniverſaries, and other offices for the dead, which uſually

uſually are very profitable, rich and eaſy, theſe things may poſſibly have ſole influences upon their underſtanding, but whether they have or no God only knows. If the propoſition and article were true, theſe ends might juſtly be ſubordinate and conſiſtent with a true propoſition. And there are ſome truths that are alſo profitable, as the neceſſity of maintenance to the clergy, the doctrine of reſtitution, giving alms, lending freely, remitting debts in caſes of great neceſſity: and it would be but an ill argument, that the preachers of theſe doctrines ſpeak falſe, becauſe poſſibly in theſe articles they may ſerve their own ends. For although *Demetrius* and the crafts-men were without excuſe for reſiſting the preaching of St. *Paul*, becauſe it was notorious they reſiſted the truth upon ground of profit and perſonal emoluments, and the matter was confeſſed by themſelves, yet if the clergy ſhould maintain their juſt rites and revenues, which by pious dedications and donatives were long ſince aſcertained upon them, is it to be preſumed in order of law and charity, that this end is in the men ſubordinate to truth, becauſe it is ſo in the thing itſelf, and that therefore no judgement in prejudice of theſe truths can be made from that obſervation?

But if *aliunde* we are aſcertain'd of the truth or falſhood of a propoſition reſpectively, yet the judgment of the perſonal ends of the men, cannot ordinarily be certain and judicial, becauſe moſt commonly the acts are private, and the purpoſes internal; and temporal ends may ſometimes conſiſt with truth, and whether the purpoſes of the men make theſe ends principal or ſubordinate, no man can judge; and be they how they will, yet they do not always prove that, when they are conjunct with error, the error was cauſed by theſe purpoſes and criminal intentions.

But in queſtions practical, the doctrine itſelf and the perſon too, may with more eaſe be reproved, becauſe matter of fact being evident, and nothing being ſo certain as the experiments of human affairs, and theſe being the immediate conſequents of ſuch doctrines, are with ſome more certainty of obſervation redargued, than the ſpeculative; whoſe judgment is of itſelf more difficult, more remote from matter and human obſervation, and with leſs curioſity and explicitneſs declared in ſcripture, as being of leſs conſequence and concernment in order to God's and man's great end. In other things, which end in notion and ineffective contemplation, where neither the doctrine is malicious, nor the perſon apparently criminal, he is to be left to the judgment of God; and as there is no certainty of human judicature in this caſe, ſo it is to no purpoſe it ſhould be judged. For if the perſon may be innocent with his error, and there is no rule whereby he can certainly be pronounced, that he is actually criminal; (as it happens in matters ſpeculative.) Since the end of the commandment is love out of a *pure conſcience, and faith unfeigned*; and the commandment may obtain its end, in a conſiſtence with this ſimple ſpeculative error, Why ſhould men trouble themſelves with ſuch opinions, ſo as to diſturb the publick charity or the private confidence? Opinions and perſons are juſt ſo to be adjudged as other matters and perſons criminal. For no man can judge any thing elſe: it muſt be a crime, and it muſt be open, ſo as to take cognizance, and make true human judgment of it. And this is all I am to ſay concerning the cauſe of hereſies, and of the diſtinguiſhing rules for guiding of our judgments towards others.

VI. As for guiding our judgments and the uſe of our reaſon in judging for ourſelves, all that is

to

to be ſaid is reducible to this one propoſition. Since errors are then made ſins, when they are contrary to charity or inconſiſtent with a good life and the honour of God, that judgment is the trueſt, or at leaſt that opinion moſt innocent that 1. beſt promotes the reputation of God's glory, and 2. is the beſt inſtrument of holy life. For in queſtions and interpretations of diſpute, theſe two analogies are the beſt to make propoſitions, and conjectures and determinations. Diligence and care in obtaining the beſt guides, and the moſt convenient aſſiſtances, prayer, and modeſty of ſpirit, ſimplicity of purpoſes and intentions, humility and aptneſs to learn, and a peaceable diſpoſition, are therefore neceſſary to finding out truths; becauſe they are parts of good life, without which our truths will do us little advantage, and our errors can have no excuſe; but with theſe diſpoſitions, as he is ſure to find out all that is neceſſary, ſo what truth he inculpably miſſes of, he is ſure is therefore not neceſſary; becauſe he could not find it when he did his beſt, and his moſt innocent endeavours. And this I ſay to ſecure the perſons; becauſe no rule can antecedently ſecure the propoſition in matters diſputable. For even in the proportions and explications of this rule there is infinite variety of diſputes: and when the diſpute is concerning free will, one party denies it becauſe he believes it magnifies the grace of God, that it works irreſiſtably; the other affirms, becauſe he believes it engages us upon greater care, and piety of our endeavours. The one opinion thinks God reaps the glory of our good actions, the other thinks it charges our bad actions upon him. So in the queſtion of merit, one part chuſes his aſſertion, becauſe he thinks it encourages us to do good works; the other believes it makes us proud, and therefore he rejects

it. The first believes it increases piety, the second believes it increases spiritual presumption and vanity. The first thinks it magnifies God's justice, the other thinks it derogates from his mercy. Now then, since neither this nor any ground can secure a man from possibility of mistaking, we were infinitely miserable, if it would not secure us from punishment, so long as we willingly consent not to a crime, and do our best endeavour to avoid an error. Only by the way, let me observe, that since there are such great differences of apprehension concerning the consequents of an article, no man is to be charged with the odious consequences of his opinion. Indeed his doctrine is, but the person is not, if he understand not such things to be consequent to his doctrine; for if he did, and then avow them, they are his direct opinions, and he stands as chargeable with them as with his first propositions; but if he disavow them, he would certainly rather quit his opinion, than avow such errors or impieties, which are pretended to be consequent to it; because every man knows that can be no truth, from whence falshood naturally and immediately derives; and he therefore believes his first proposition, because he believes it innocent of such errors as are charg'd upon it directly or consequently.

VII. So that now, since no error, neither for itself nor its consequents, is to be charg'd as criminal upon a pious person, since no simple error is a sin, nor condemns us before the throne of God, since he is so pitiful to our crimes, that he pardons many *de toto & integro*, in all makes abatement for the violence of temptation, and the surprizal and invasion of our faculties, and therefore much less will demand of us an account for our weaknesses; and since the strongest understanding

derſtanding cannot pretend to ſuch an immunity and exemption from the condition of men, as not to be deceived and confeſs its weakneſs; it remains we inquire what deportment is to be uſed towards perſons of a differing perſuaſion, when we are (I do not ſay doubtful of a propoſition, but) convinced that he who differs from us is in error, for this was the firſt intention, and the laſt end of this diſcourſe.

SECT. XIII.

Of the deportment to be uſed towards perſons diſagreeing, and the reaſons why they are not to be puniſhed with death, &c.

I. FOR although every man may be deceived, yet ſome are right and may know it too, for every man that may err, does not therefore certainly err; and if he err becauſe he recedes from his rule, then if he follow it he may do right, and if ever any man upon juſt grounds did change his opinion, then he was in the right and was ſure of it too, and although confidence is miſtaken for a juſt perſuaſion many times, yet ſome men are confident, and have reaſon ſo to be. Now when this happens, the queſtion is, what deportment they are to uſe towards perſons that diſagree from them, and by conſequence are in error?

II. 1. Then, no chriſtian is to be put to death, diſmembred, or otherwiſe directly perſecuted for his opinion, which does not teach impiety or blaſphemy. If it plainly and apparently bring in a crime, and himſelf act it or encourage it, then the matter of fact is puniſhable accord-

ing

ing to its proportion or malignity; as if he preach treaſon or ſedition, his opinion is not his excuſe, becauſe it brings in a crime, and a man is never the leſs traitor, becauſe he believes it lawful to commit treaſon; and a man is a murderer if he kill his brother unjuſtly, although he think he does God good ſervice in it. Matters of fact are equally judicable whether the principle of them be from within or from without: and if a man could pretend to innocence in being ſeditious, blaſphemous, or perjured, by perſuading himſelf it is lawful, there were as great a gate opened to all iniquity, as will entertain all the pretences, the deſigns, the impoſtures, and diſguiſes of the world. And therefore God hath taken order that all rules concerning matters of fact and good life ſhall be ſo clearly explicated, that without the crime of the man, he cannot be ignorant of all his practical duty. And therefore the apoſtles and primitive doctors made no ſcruple of condemning ſuch perſons for hereticks, that did dogmatize a ſin. He that teaches others to ſin, is worſe than he that commits the crime, whether he be tempted by his own intereſt, or encouraged by the others doctrine. It was as bad in *Baſilides* to teach it to be lawful to renounce faith and religion, and take all manner of oaths and covenants in time of perſecution, as if himſelf had done ſo; nay it is as much worſe, as the miſchief is more univerſal, or as a fountain is greater than a drop of water taken from it. He that writes treaſon in a book, or preaches ſedition in a pulpit, and perſuades it to the people, is the greateſt traitor and incendiary; and his opinion there is the fountain of a ſin, and therefore could not be entertained in his underſtanding upon weakneſs, or inculpable or innocent prejudice; he cannot from ſcripture or divine revelation have

any

any pretence to colour that ſo fairly as to ſeduce either a wife or an honeſt man. If it reſt there and go no futher, it is not cognoſcible, and ſo ſcapes that way; but if it be publiſhed and come *a ſtyle ad Macharam* (as *Tertullian*'s phraſe is) then it becomes matter of fact in principle and in perſuaſion, and is juſt ſo puniſhable, as is the crime that it perſuades: ſuch were they of whom St. *Paul* complains, who brought in damnable doctries and luſts. * St. *Paul's Utinam abſcindantur* is juſt of them, take it in any ſenſe of rigour and ſeverity, ſo it be proportionable to the crime, or criminal doctrine. Such were thoſe of whom God ſpake in *Deut.* 13. If any prophet tempt to idolatry, ſaying, let us go after other Gods, he ſhall be ſlain. But theſe do not come into this queſtion. But the propoſition is to be underſtood concerning queſtions diſputable in *materia intellectuali*, which alſo for all that law of killing, ſuch falſe prophets were permitted with impunity in the ſynagogue, as appears beyond exception in the great diviſions and diſputes between the Phariſees and the Sadducees. I deny not but certain and known idolatry, or any other ſort of practical impiety, with its principiant doctrine may be puniſhed corporally, becauſe it is no other but matter of fact; but no matter of mere opinion, no errors that of themſelves are not ſins, are to be perſecuted or puniſhed by death or corporal inflictions. This is now to be proved.

III. 2. All the former diſcourſe is ſufficient argument how eaſy it is for us in ſuch matters to be deceived. So long as chriſtian religion was a ſimple profeſſion of the articles of belief, and a hearty proſecution of the rules of good life, the fewneſs of the articles and the clearneſs of the

* *Galatians* 5.

rule,

rule, was cauſe of the ſeldom prevarication. But when divinity is ſwelled up to ſo great a body, when the ſeveral queſtions which the peeviſhneſs and wantonneſs of ſixteen ages have commenced, are concentered into one, and from all theſe queſtions ſomething is drawn into the body of *Theology*, till it hath aſcended up to the greatneſs of a mountain, and the ſum of divinity collected by *Aquinas*, makes a volume as great as was that of *Livy* mocked at in the *Epigram*,

Quem mea vix totum bibliotheca capit,

It is impoſſible for any induſtry to conſider ſo many particulars, in the infinite numbers of queſtions, as are neceſſary to be conſidered before we can with certainty determine any. And after all the conſiderations which we can have in a whole age, we are not ſure *not to be deceived*. The obſcurity of ſome queſtions, the nicety of ſome articles, the intricacy of ſome revelations, the variety of human underſtandings, the windings of *Logick*, the tricks of adverſaries, the ſubtlety of ſophiſters, the engagement of educations, perſonal affections, the portentous number of writers, the infinitity of authorities, the vaſtneſs of ſome arguments, as conſiſting in enumeration of many particulars, the uncertainty of others, the ſeveral degrees of probability, the difficulties of ſcripture, the invalidity of probation of tradition, the oppoſition of all exterior arguments to each other, and their open conteſtation, the publick violence done to authors and records, the private arts and ſupplantings, the falſifyings, the indefatigable induſtry of ſome men to abuſe all underſtandings, and all perſuaſions in their own opinions, theſe and thouſands more, even all the difficulty of things, and the weakneſſes of man, and all the arts of the devil,

devil, have made it impossible for any man in so great variety of matter not to be deceived. No man pretends to it but the Pope, and no man is more deceived than he is in that very particular.

IV. 3. From hence proceeds a danger which is consequent to this proceeding; for if we, who are so apt to be deceived, and so insecure in our resolution of questions disputable, should persecute a dis-agreeing person, we are not sure we do not fight against God, for if his proposition be true and persecuted, then, because all truth derives from God, this proceeding is against God; and therefore this is not to be done upon *Gamaliel*'s ground, lest peradventure we be found to fight against God, of which, because we can have no security (at least) in this case, we have all the guilt of a doubtful or an uncertain conscience. For if there be no security in the thing, as I have largely proved, the conscience in such cases is as uncertain as the question is, and if it be not doubtful where it is uncertain, it is because the man is not wise, but as confident as ignorant; the first without reason, and the second without excuse. And it is very disproportionable for a man to persecute another certainly, for a proposition, that if he were wise, he would know is not certain; at least, the other person may innocently be uncertain of it. If he be killed, he is certainly killed; but if he be called heretick, it is not so certain that he is an heretick. It were good therefore, that proceedings were according to evidence, and the rivers not swell over the banks, nor a certain definitive sentence of death passed upon such persuasions which cannot certainly be defined. And this argument is of so much the more force, because we see that the greatest persecutions that ever have been, were against truth, even against christianity itself; and it was a prediction of our

blessed

bleſſed ſaviour, that perſecution ſhould be the lot of true believers: and if we compute the experience of ſuffering Chriſtendom, and the prediction that truth ſhould ſuffer, with thoſe few inſtances of ſuffering hereticks, it is odds, but perſecution is on the wrong ſide, and that it is error and hereſy, that is cruel and tyrannical, eſpecially ſince the truth of Jeſus Chriſt, and of his religion are ſo meek, ſo charitable, and ſo merciful: and we may in this caſe, exactly uſe the words of St. *Paul, But as then, he that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the ſpirit; even ſo it is now*: and ſo it ever will be till Chriſt's ſecond coming.

V. 4. * Whoever perſecutes a diſagreeing perſon, arms all the world againſt himſelf; and all pious people of his own perſuaſion, when the ſcales of authority return to his adverſary, and atteſt his contradictory; and then, what can he urge for mercy for himſelf, or his party that ſheweth none to others? If he ſay, that he is to be ſpared becauſe he believes true, but the other was juſtly perſecuted becauſe he was in error, he is ridiculous. For he is as confidently believed to be a heretick, as he believes his adverſary ſuch, and whether he be or no, being the thing in queſtion, of this he is not to be his own judge, but he that hath authority on his ſide, will be ſure to judge againſt him. So that, what either ſide can indifferently make uſe of, it is good that neither would, becauſe neither ſide can with reaſon ſufficient do it in prejudice of the other. If a man will ſay, that every man muſt take his adventure,

* *Quo comperto illi in noſtram perniciem licentiore audacia graſſabuntur.* S. Aug. epiſt. ad Donat. Proconſ. & Contr. ep. Fund. *ita nunc debeo ſuſtinere & tanta patientia vobiſcum agere quanta mecum egerunt proximi mei cum in veſtro dogmate rabioſus ac cæcus errarem.*

and

and if it happen authority to be with him, he will perſecute his adverſaries; and if it turn againſt him he will bear it as well as he can, and hope for a reward of martyrdom, and innocent ſuffering; beſides that this is ſo equal to be ſaid by all ſides, and beſides, that this is a way to make an eternal diſunion of hearts and charities, and that it will make Chriſtendom nothing but a ſhambles, and a perpetual butchery, and as faſt as mens wits grow wanton, or confident, or proud, or abuſed, ſo often there will be new executions and maſſacres: Beſides all this, it is moſt unreaſonable and unjuſt, as being contrary to thoſe laws of juſtice and charity, whereby we are bound with greater zeal to ſpare and preſerve an innocent, then to condemn a guilty perſon, and there's leſs malice and iniquity in ſparing the guilty, than in condemning the good. Becauſe it is in the power of men to remit a guilty perſon to divine judicature, and for divers cauſes, not to uſe ſeverity, but in no caſe is it lawful, neither hath God at all given to man a power to condemn ſuch perſons as cannot be proved other than pious and innocent. And therefore it is better, if it ſhould ſo happen, that we ſhould ſpare the innocent perſon, and one that is actually deceived, than that upon the turn of the wheel, the true believers ſhould be deſtroyed.

VI. And this very reaſon, he that had authority ſufficient, and abſolute to make laws, was pleaſed to urge as a reaſonable inducement for the eſtabliſhing of that law which he made for the indemnity of erring perſons. It was in the parable of the tares mingled with the good ſeed, in *Agro dominico*, the good ſeed (Chriſt himſelf being the interpreter) are the children of the kingdom; the tares are the children of the wicked one; upon this comes the precept, *gather not the tares*

by

by themſelves, but let them both grow together till the harveſt; that is, the day of judgment. This parable hath been tortured infinitely to make it confeſs its meaning, but we ſhall ſoon diſpatch it. All the difficulty and variety of expoſition is reducible to theſe two queſtions, What is meant by [*gather not*,] and what by [*Tares.*] That is, what kind of ſword is forbidden, and what kind of perſons are to be tolerated. The former is clear; for the ſpiritual ſword is not forbidden to be uſed to any ſort of criminals, for that would deſtroy the power of excommunication. The prohibition therefore lies againſt the uſe of the temporal ſword, in cutting off ſome perſons. Who they are, is the next difficulty. But by *tares*, or the *children of the wicked one*, are meant either perſons of ill lives, wicked perſons only *in re practicâ*, or elſe another kind of evil perſons, men criminal or faulty *in re intellectuali*. One or other of theſe two muſt be meant; a third I know not. But the former cannot be meant, becauſe it would deſtroy all bodies politick, which cannot conſiſt without laws, nor laws without a compulſory and a power of the ſword; therefore if criminals were to be let alone till the day of judgment, bodies politick muſt ſtand or fall *ad arbitrium impiorum*; and nothing good could be protected, not innocence itſelf; nothing could be ſecure but violence and tyranny. It follows then, that ſince a kind of perſons, which are indeed faulty, are to be tolerated, it muſt be meant of perſons faulty in another kind, in which the goſpel had not in other places clearly eſtabliſhed a power externally compulſory; and therefore ſince in all actions practically criminal a power of the ſword is permitted, here where it is denied muſt mean a crime of another kind, and by conſequence errors intellectual, commonly called hereſy.

VII.

VII. And after all this the reaſon there given confirms this * interpretation, for therefore it is forbidden to cut off theſe tares, leſt we alſo pull up the wheat with them, which is the ſum of theſe two laſt arguments. For becauſe hereſy is of ſo nice conſideration, and difficult ſentence, in thinking to root up hereſies, we may by our † miſtakes deſtroy true doctrine, which although it be poſſible to be done in all caſes of practical queſtion, by miſtake, yet becauſe external actions are more diſcernable than inward ſpeculations and opinions, innocent perſons are not ſo eaſily miſtaken for the guilty, in actions criminal, as in matters of inward perſuaſion. And upon that very reaſon St. *Martin* was zealous to have procured a revocation of a commiſſion granted to certain tribunes to make enquiry in *Spain* for ſects and opinions; for under colour of rooting out the Priſcilianiſts, there was much miſchief done, and more likely to happen to the Orthodox. For it happened then, as oftentimes ſince, *Pallore potius & veſte quam fide hæreticus dijudicari ſolebat aliquando per Tribunos Maximi.* They were no good inquiſitors of heretical pravity; ſo *Sulpitius* witneſſes. But ſecondly, the reaſon ſays, that therefore theſe perſons are ſo to be permitted as not to be perſecuted, leſt when a revolution of human affairs ſets contrary opinions in the throne or chair, they who were perſecuted before, ſhould now themſelves become perſecutors of others; and ſo at one time or other, before or after, the wheat be rooted up, and the truth be perſecuted. But as theſe reaſons confirm the law, and this ſenſe of it, ſo abſtract-

* Vide St. Chryſoſt. homil. 47. in Cap. 13. Matth. et. St. Auguſt. Queſt. in cap. 13. Mat. St. Cyprian. Ep. lib. 3. Ep. 1. Theophyl. in 13. Matth.

† St. Hieron. in cap. 13. Matth. ait, *per hanc parabolam ſignificari, ne in rebus dubiis præceps fiat judicium.*

ing from the law, it is of itſelf concluding by an argument *ab incommodo*, and that founded upon the principles of juſtice, and right reaſon, as I formerly alledged.

VIII. 4. We are not only uncertain of finding out truths in matters diſputable, but we are certain that the beſt and ableſt * doctors of Chriſtendom have been actually deceived in matters of great concernment, which thing is evident in all thoſe inſtances of perſons from whoſe doctrines all ſorts of chriſtians reſpectively take liberty to diſſent. The errors of *Papias*, *Irenæus*, *Lactantius*, *Juſtin Martyr*, in the millenary opinion; of St. *Cyprian*, *Firmilian*, the Aſian and African fathers, in the queſtion of re-baptization; St. *Auſtin* in his decretory and uncharitable ſentence againſt the unbaptiſed children of chriſtian parents, the Roman or the Greek doctors in the queſtion of the proceſſion of the holy ghoſt, and in the matter of images, are examples beyond exception. Ἀμφὶ δ' ἀνδρῶτων φρεσὶν Ἀμπλακίαι ἀναρίθμητοι κρέμανται. Now if theſe great perſonages had been perſecuted or deſtroyed for their opinions; who ſhould have anſwered the invaluable loſs the church of God would have ſuſtained in miſſing ſo excellent, ſo exemplary, and ſo great lights? But then if theſe perſons erred, and by conſequence, might have been deſtroyed, what ſhould have become of others, whoſe underſtanding was lower, and their ſecurity leſs; their errors more, and their danger greater? At this rate

* *Illi in vos ſæviant qui neſciunt cum quo labore verum inveniatur, & quam difficile caveantur errores. Illi in vos ſæviant qui neſciunt quam rarum et arduum ſit carnalia phantaſmata piæ mentis ſerenitate ſuperare. Illi in vos ſæviant qui neſciunt quibus & ſuſpiriis & gemitibus fiat ut ex quantulacunque parte poſſit intelligi Deus. Poſtremo illi in vos ſæviant qui nullo tali errore decepti ſunt, quali vos deceptos vident.*

all

all men ſhould have paſſed through the fire, for who can eſcape when St. *Cyprian* and St. *Auſtin* cannot? Now to ſay theſe perſons were not to be perſecuted becauſe although they had errors, yet none condemned by the church, at that time or before, is to ſay nothing to the purpoſe, and nothing that is true. Not true, becauſe St. *Cyprian*'s error was condemned by Pope *Stephen*, which in the preſent ſenſe of the prevailing party in the church of *Rome*, is to be condemned by the church. Not to the purpoſe; becauſe it is nothing elſe but to ſay that the church did tolerate their errors. For ſince thoſe opinions were open and manifeſt to the world, that the church did not condemn them, was either becauſe thoſe opinions were by the church not thought to be errors, or if they were, yet ſhe thought fit to tolerate the error and the erring perſon. And if ſhe would do ſo ſtill, it would in moſt caſes be better than now it is. And yet if the church had condemned them, it had not altered the caſe as to this queſtion, for either the perſons upon the condemnation of their error ſhould have been perſecuted or not. If not, why ſhall they now, againſt the inſtance and precedent of thoſe ages, who were confeſſedly wiſe and pious, and whoſe practice are often made to us arguments to follow? If yea, and that they had been perſecuted, it is the thing which this argument condemns; and the loſs of the church had been invaluable in the loſing or the provocation and temptation of ſuch rare perſonages: and the example and the rule of ſo ill conſequence, that all perſons might upon the ſame ground have ſuffered, and though ſome had eſcaped, yet no man could have any more ſecurity from puniſhment than from error.

* St. Auguſt. Contr. Ep. Fund.

IX. 5. Either the diſagreeing perſon is in error, or not, but a true believer; in either of the caſes to perſecute him is extremely imprudent. For if he be a true believer, then it is a clear caſe that we do open violence to God, and his ſervants, and his truth. If he be in error, what greater folly and ſtupidity than to give to error the glory of martyrdom, and the advantages which are accidentally conſequent to a perſecution? For as it was true of the martyrs, *Quoties morimur toties naſcimur*, and the increaſe of their trouble, was the increaſe of their confidence and the eſtabliſhment of their perſuaſions: ſo it is in all falſe opinions; for that an opinion is true or falſe is extrinſecal or accidental to the conſequents and advantages it gets by being afflicted. And there is a popular pity that follows all perſons in miſery, and that compaſſion breeds likeneſs of affections, and that very often produces likeneſs of perſuaſion; and ſo much the rather, becauſe there ariſes a jealouſy and pregnant ſuſpicion that they who perſecute an opinion are deſtitute of ſufficient arguments to confute it, and that the hangman is the beſt diſputant. For if thoſe arguments which they have for their own doctrine were a ſufficient ground of confidence and perſuaſion, men would be more willing to uſe thoſe means and arguments, which are better compliances with human underſtanding, which more naturally ſatisfy it, which are more humane and chriſtian, than that way which ſatisfies none, which deſtroys many, which provokes more, which makes all men jealous. To which add, that thoſe who die for their opinion, leave in all men great arguments of the heartineſs of their belief, of the confidence of their perſuaſion, of the piety and innocency of their perſons, of the purity of their intention and ſimplicity of purpoſes; that they

are

are perſons totally diſintereſted, and ſeparate from deſign. For no intereſt can be ſo great as to be put in balance againſt a man's life and his ſoul; and he very imprudently ſerves his ends who ſeeingly and fore-knowingly loſes his life in the proſecution of them. Juſt as if *Titius* ſhould offer to die for *Sempronius* upon condition he might receive twenty talents when he had done his work. It is certainly an argument of a great love, and a great confidence, and a great ſincerity, and great hope when a man lays down his life in atteſtation of a propoſition. *Greater love than this hath no man, than to lay down his life*, ſays our bleſſed ſaviour. And although laying of a wager, is an argument of confidence, more than truth, yet laying ſuch a wager, ſtaking of a man's ſoul, and pawning his life, gives a hearty teſtimony that the perſon is honeſt, confident, reſigned, charitable and noble. And I know not whether truth can do a perſon or a cauſe more advantages than theſe can do to an error. And therefore beſides the impiety, there is great imprudence in canonizing a heretick, and conſecrating an error by ſuch means, which were better preſerved as encouragements of truth, and comfort, to real and true martyrs. And it is not amiſs to obſerve that this very advantage was taken by hereticks who were ready to ſhew, and boaſt their catalogues of martyrs, in particular the *Circumcellians* did ſo, and the *Donatiſts*, and yet the firſt were hereticks, the ſecond ſchiſmaticks. And it was remarkable in the ſcholars of *Priſcillian*, who, as they had their maſter in the reputation of a ſaint while he was living, ſo when he was dead, they had him in veneration as a martyr; they with reverence and devotion carried his, and the bodies of his ſlain companions to an honourable ſepulchre, and counted it religion to ſwear by the name of *Priſcillian*. So that the extinguiſhing of the perſon, gives life and credit to his doc-

trine, and when he is dead he yet ſpeaks more effectually.

X. 6. It is unnatural and unreaſonable to perſecute diſagreeing opinions. Unnatural; for underſtanding being a thing wholly ſpiritual, cannot be reſtrained, and therefore neither puniſhed by corporal afflictions. It is in *aliena republica*, a matter of another world; you may as well cure the cholick by bruſhing a man's cloaths, or fill a man's belly with a ſyllogiſm: theſe things do not communicate in matter, and therefore neither in action or paſſion; and ſince all puniſhments in a prudent government puniſh the offender to prevent a future crime, and ſo it proves more medicinal than vindictive, the punitive act being in order to the cure and prevention: and ſince no puniſhment of the body can cure a diſeaſe in the ſoul, it is diſproportionable in nature, and in all civil government, to puniſh where the puniſhment can do no good. It may be an act of tyranny, but never of juſtice. For is an opinion ever the more true or falſe for being perſecuted? Some men have believed it the more, as being provoked into a confidence, and vexed into a reſolution, but the thing itſelf is not the truer; and though the hangman may confute a man with an inexplicable dilemma, yet not convince his underſtanding, for ſuch premiſes can infer no concluſion, but that of a man's life: and a wolf may as well give laws to the underſtanding, as he whoſe dictates are only propounded in violence, and writ in blood. And a dog is as capable of a law as a man, if there be no choice in his obedience, nor diſcourſe in his choice, nor reaſon to ſatisfy his diſcourſe. And as it is unnatural, ſo it is unreaſonable, that *Sempronius* ſhould force *Caius* to be of his opinion, becauſe *Sempronius* is conſul this year, and commands the *Lictors*: As if he that can kill a man cannot

cannot but be infallible: and if he be not, why ſhould I do violence to my conſcience, becauſe he can do violence to my perſon?

XIV. Force in matters of opinion can do no good, but is very apt to do hurt; for no man can change his opinion when he will, or be ſatisfied in his reaſon that his opinion is falſe, becauſe diſcountenanced. If a man could change his opinion when he liſts, he might cure many inconveniences of his life: all his fears and his ſorrows would ſoon diſband, if he would but alter his opinion, whereby he is perſuaded, that ſuch an accident that afflicts him is an evil, and ſuch an object formidable; let him but believe himſelf impregnable, or that he receives a benefit when he is plundered, diſgraced, impriſoned, condemned, and afflicted, neither his ſleeps need to be diſturbed, nor his quietneſs diſcompoſed. But if a man cannot change his opinion when he liſts, nor ever does heartily or reſolutely, but when he cannot do otherwiſe; then to uſe force, may make him an hypocrite, but never to be a right believer, and ſo inſtead of erecting a trophee to God and true religion, we build a monument for the devil. Infinite examples are recorded in church ſtory to this very purpoſe: But *Socrates* inſtances in one for all; for when *Eleuſius* biſhop of *Cyzicum* was threatened by the emperor *Valens* with baniſhment and confiſcation, if he did not ſubſcribe to the decree of *Ariminum*, at laſt he yielded to the *Arrian* opinion, and preſently fell into great torment of conſcience, openly at *Cyzicum* recanted the error, aſked God and the church forgiveneſs, and complained of the Emperor's injuſtice, and that was all the good the *Arrian* party got by offering violence to his conſcience. And ſo many families in *Spain*, which are as they call them new chriſtians, and of a ſuſpected faith, into

which they were forced by the tyranny of the inquiſition, and yet are ſecret Moors, is evidence enough, of the * inconvenience of preaching a doctrine *in ore gladii cruentandi.* For it either puniſhes a man for keeping a good conſcience, or forces him into a bad; it either puniſhes ſincerity, or perſuades hypocriſy; it perſecutes a truth, or drives into error: and it teaches a man to diſſemble and to be ſafe, but never to be honeſt.

XII. 8. It is one of the glories of chriſtian religion, that it was ſo pious, excellent, miraculous and perſuaſive, that it came in upon its own piety and wiſdom, with no other force but a torrent of arguments and demonſtration of the ſpirit; a mighty ruſhing wind to beat down all ſtrong holds, and every high thought and imagination; but towards the perſons of men it was always full of meekneſs and charity, compliance and toleration, condeſcenſion and bearing with one another, *reſtoring perſons overtaken with an error, in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering leſt we alſo be tempted.* The conſideration is as prudent, and the propoſition as juſt, as the precept is charitable, and the precedent was pious and holy. Now things are beſt conſerved with that which gives it the firſt being, and which is agreeable to its temper and conſtitution. That precept which it chiefly preaches, in order to all the bleſſedneſs in the world, that is, of meekneſs, mercy and charity, ſhould alſo preſerve itſelf, and promote its own intereſt. For indeed nothing will do it ſo well, nothing doth ſo excellently inſinuate itſelf into the underſtandings and affections of men, as when the

* *Ejuſmodi fuit Hipponenſium converſio, cujus quidem ſpecies decepit Auguſt. ita ut opinaretur hæreticos licet non morte trucidandos vi tamen coercendos. Experientia enim demonſtravit eos tam facile ad Arianiſmum tranſiiſſe atque ad Catholiciſmum, cum Arriani Principes rerum in ea civitate potirentur.*

actions

actions and persuasions of a sect, and every part and principle and promotion are univocal. And it would be a mighty disparagement to so glorious an institution, that in its principle it should be merciful and humane, and in the promotion and propagation of it so inhumane: And it would be improbable and unreasonable, that the sword should be used in the persuasion of one proposition, and yet in the persuasion of the whole religion nothing like it. To do so, may serve the end of a temporal prince, but never promote the honour of Christ's kingdom; it may secure a design of *Spain*, but will very much disserve christendom, to offer to support it by that which good men believe to be a distinctive cognizance of the Mahometan religion, from the excellency and piety of christianity, whose sense and spirit is described in those excellent words of St. *Paul*, 2. *Tim.* 2. 24. *The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging the truth.* They that oppose themselves, must not be strucken by any of God's servants; and if yet any man will smite these who are his opposites in opinion, he will get nothing by that, he must quit the title of being a servant of God for his pains. And I think a distinction of persons secular and ecclesiastical will do no advantage for an escape; because even the secular power, if it be christian, and a servant of God, must not be πληκτικὸν· Δοῦλον Κυρίου οὐ δεῖ μάχεσθαι, I mean in those cases where meekness of instruction is the remedy, or if the case be irremediable, abscission by censures is the penalty.

XIII. 9. And if yet in the nature of the thing it were neither unjust nor unreasonable, yet there is nothing under God Almighty that hath power over

over the ſoul of man, ſo as to command a perſuaſion, or to judge a diſagreeing: human poſitive laws direct all external acts in order to ſeveral ends, and the judges take cognizance accordingly, but no man can command the will, or puniſh him, that obeys the law againſt his will; for becauſe its end is ſerved in external obedience, it neither looks after more, neither can it be ſerved by more, nor take notice of any more. And yet poſſibly the underſtanding is leſs ſubject to human power than the will, for that human power hath a command over external acts which naturally and regularly flow from the will, *& ut plurimùm* ſuppoſe a direct act of will, but always either a direct or indirect volition, primary or accidental; but the underſtanding is a natural faculty ſubject to no command, but where the command is itſelf a reaſon fit to ſatisfy and perſuade it. And therefore God commanding us to believe ſuch revelations, perſuades and ſatisfies the underſtanding, by his commanding and revealing: for there is no greater probation in the world that a propoſition is true, than becauſe God hath commanded us to believe it. But becauſe no man's command is a ſatisfaction to the underſtanding, or a verification of the propoſition, therefore the underſtanding is not ſubject to human authority. They may perſuade, but not injoin where God hath not; and where God hath, if it appear ſo to him, he is an infidel if he do not believe it. And if all men have no other efficacy or authority on the underſtanding but by perſuaſion, propoſal and intreaty, then a man is bound to aſſent but according to the operation of the argument, and the energy of perſuaſion, neither indeed can he, though he would never ſo fain, and he that out of fear and too much compliance and deſire to be ſafe, ſhall deſire to bring his

his understanding with some duxation to the belief of human dictates and authorities, may as often miss of the truth as hit it, but is sure always to lose the comfort of truth, because he believes it upon indirect, insufficient, and incompetent arguments: and as his desire it should be so is his best argument that it is so, so the pleasing of men is his best reward, and his not being condemned and contradicted all the possession of a truth.

SECT. XIV.

Of the practice of Christian Churches towards persons disagreeing, and when persecution first came in.

I. AND thus this truth hath been practised in all times of christian religion, when there were no collateral designs on foot, nor interests to be served, nor passions to be satisfied. In St. *Paul*'s time, though the censure of heresy were not so loose and forward as afterwards, and all that were called hereticks were clearly such, and highly criminal; yet as their crime was, so was their censure, that is, spiritual. They were first admonished, once at least, for so [a] *Irenæus*, [b] *Tertullian*, [c] *Cyprian*, [d] *Ambrose*, and [e] *Hierome* read that place of *Titus* 3. But since that time all men, and at that time some read it, *Post unam & alteram admonitionem*, reject a heretick. Rejection from the communion of saints after two warnings, that's the penalty. Saint *John* expresses it by not *eating* with them, not bidding them *God speed*, but

[a] *Lib. 3. cap. 3.* [b] *De præscript.* [c] *Lib. ad Quirinum.* [d] *In hunc locum.* [e] *Ibidem.*

the

the perſons againſt whom he decrees ſo ſeverely, are ſuch as denied Chriſt to be come in the fleſh, direct Antichriſts: and let the ſentence be as high as it liſts in this caſe, all that I obſerve is, that ſince in ſo damnable doctrines nothing but ſpiritual cenſure, ſeparation from the communion of the faithful was enjoined and preſcribed, we cannot pretend to an apoſtolical precedent, if in matters of diſpute and innocent queſtion, and of great uncertainty and no malignity, we ſhould proceed to ſentence of death.

II. For it is but an abſurd and illiterate arguing, to ſay that excommunication is a greater puniſhment, and killing, a leſs; and therefore whoever may be excommunicated may alſo be put to death (which indeed is the reaſoning that *Bellarmine* uſes) for firſt, excommunication is not directly, and of itſelf a greater puniſhment than corporal death. Becauſe it is indefinite, and incompleat, and in order to a further puniſhment, which if it happen, then the excommunication was the inlet to it; if it do not, the excommunication did not ſignify half ſo much as the loſs of a member, much leſs death. For it may be totally ineffectual, either by the iniquity of the proceeding, or repentance of the perſon: and in all times and caſes it is a medicine if the man pleaſe, if he will not, but perſevere in his impiety, then it is himſelf that brings the cenſure to effect, that actuates the judgment and gives a ſting, and an energy upon that which otherwiſe would be χειρ ἄκυρος. But, 2. when it is at worſt, it does not kill the ſoul, it only conſigns it to that death which it had deſerved, and ſhould have received independently from that ſentence of the church. And, 3. yet excommunication is to admirable purpoſe; for whether it refer to the perſon cenſured or to others,

it

it is prudential in itſelf, it is exemplary to others, it is medicinal to all. For the perſon cenſured is by this means threatened into piety, and the threatning made the more energetical upon him becauſe by fiction of law, or as it were by a ſacramental repreſentment, the pains of hell are made preſent to him; and ſo becomes an act of prudent judicature, and excellent diſcipline, and the beſt inſtrument of ſpiritual government: becauſe the nearer the threatning is reduced to matter, and the more preſent and circumſtantiate it is made, the more operative it is upon our ſpirits while they are immerged in matter. And this is the full ſenſe and power of excommunication in its direct intention: conſequently and accidentally other evils might follow it, as in the times of the apoſtles, the cenſured perſons were buffeted by ſatan, and even at this day there is leſs ſecurity even to the temporal condition of ſuch a perſon whom his ſpiritual parents have anathematized. But beſides this, I know no warrant to affirm any thing of excommunication; for the ſentence of the church does but declare, not effect the final ſentence of damnation. Whoever deſerves excommunication deſerves damnation; and he that repents ſhall be ſaved, though he die out of the churches external communion, and if he do not repent, he ſhall be damned though he was not excommunicated.

III. But ſuppoſe it greater than the ſentence of corporal death, yet it follows not, becauſe hereticks may be excommunicated, therefore killed; for from a greater to a leſs, in a ſeveral kind of things the argument concludes not. It is a greater thing to make an excellent diſcourſe than to make a ſhoe, yet he that can do the greater cannot do this leſs. An angel cannot beget a man, and yet he can do a greater matter in that kind

kind of operations which we term ſpiritual and angelical. And if this were concluding that whoever may be excommunicated may be killed, then, becauſe of excommunications the church is confeſſed the ſole and entire judge; ſhe is alſo an abſolute diſpoſer of the lives of perſons. I believe this will be but ill doctrine in *Spain*: for in *Bullâ Cœnæ Domini* the king of *Spain* is every year excommunicated on Maunday Thurſday; but if by the ſame power he might alſo be put to death (as upon this ground he may) the pope might with more eaſe be inveſted in that part of St. *Peter*'s patrimony which that king hath invaded and ſurprized. But beſides this, it were extreme harſh doctrine in a Roman Conſiſtory, from whence excommunications iſſue for trifles, for fees, for not ſuffering themſelves infinitely to be oppreſſed, for any thing; if this be greater than death, how great a tyranny is that which does more then kill men for leſs then trifles, or elſe how inconſequent is that argument which concludes its purpoſe upon ſo falſe pretence and ſuppoſition?

IV. Well, however zealous the apoſtles were againſt hereticks, yet none were by them, or their dictates, put to death. The death of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, and the blindneſs of *Elymas* the ſorcerer amount not to this, for they were miraculous inflictions: and the firſt was a puniſhment to vow-breach and ſacriledge, the ſecond of ſorcery, and open conteſtation againſt the religion of Jeſus Chriſt; neither of them concerned the caſe of this preſent queſtion: or if the Caſe were the ſame, yet the Authority is not the ſame. For he that inflicted theſe puniſhments was infallible, and of a power competent: But no man at this day is ſo. But as yet, people were converted by miracles, and preaching, and diſputing, and hereticks by the ſame means were convinced, and all men

men inſtructed, none tortured for their opinion. And this continued till chriſtian people were vexed by diſagreeing perſons, and were impatient and peeviſh, by their own too much confidence and the luxuriancy of a proſperous fortune: but then they would not endure perſons that did dogmatize any thing which might intrench upon their reputation or their intereſt. And it is obſervable that no man, nor age did ever teach the lawfulneſs of putting hereticks to death, till they grew wanton with proſperity. But when the reputation of the governors was concerned, when the intereſts of men were endangered, when they had ſomething to loſe, when they had built their eſtimation upon the credit of diſputable queſtions, when they began to be jealous of other men, when they overvalued themſelves, and their own opinions, when ſome perſons invaded biſhopricks upon pretence of new opinions; then they, as they thrived in the favour of emperors, and in the ſucceſs of their diſputes, ſollicited the temporal power to baniſh, to fine, to impriſon, and to kill their adverſaries.

V. So that the caſe ſtands thus. In the beſt times, among the beſt men, when there were fewer temporal ends to be ſerved, when religion and the pure and ſimple deſigns of chriſtianity were only to be promoted; in thoſe times and amongſt ſuch men, no perſecution was actual, nor perſuaded nor allowed towards diſagreeing perſons. But as men had ends of their own and not of Chriſts, as They receded from their duty, and religion from its purity, as chriſtianity began to be compounded with intereſts, and blended with temporal deſigns, ſo men were perſecuted for their opinions. This is moſt apparent, if we conſider when perſecution firſt came in, and if we obſerve how it was checked by the holieſt and the wiſeſt perſons.

VI.

VI. The firſt great inſtance I ſhall note was in *Priſcillian* and his followers, who were condemned to death by the tyrant *Maximus*. Which inſtance although St. *Hierom* obſerves as a puniſhment, and judgment for the crime of hereſy, yet is of no uſe in the preſent queſtion, becauſe *Maximus* put ſome chriſtians of all ſorts to death promiſcuouſly, catholick and heretick without choice, and therefore the *Priſcilianiſts* might as well have called it a judgment upon the catholicks, as the catholicks upon them.

VII. But when *Urſatus* and *Itacius*, two biſhops, procured the *Priſcilianiſts* death by the power they had at court: St. *Martin* was ſo angry at them for their cruelty, that he excommunicated them both. And St. *Ambroſe* upon the ſame ſtock denied his communion to the *Itaciani*. And the account that *Sulpitius* gives of the ſtory is this, *Hoc modo* (ſays he) *homines luce indigniſſimi peſſimo exemplo necati ſunt.* The example was worſe than the men. If the men were heretical, the execution of them however was unchriſtian.

VIII. But it was of more authority that the Nicene Fathers ſupplicated the emperor, and prevailed for the baniſhment of * *Arius*; of this we can give no other account, but that by the hiſtory of the time we ſee baſeneſs enough, and perſonal miſdemeanor, and factiouſneſs of ſpirit in *Arius*, to have deſerved worſe than baniſhment, though the obliquity of his opinion were not put into the ballance; which we have reaſon to believe was not ſo much as conſidered, becauſe *Conſtantine* gave toleration to differing opinions, and *Arius* himſelf was reſtored upon ſuch conditions to his country and office, which would not ſtand with the ends of the catholicks, if they had been

* *Sozom. l.* 1. *c.* 20.

ſevere

ſevere exactors of concurrence and union of perſuaſions.

IX. I am ſtill within the ſcene of eccleſiaſtical perſons, and am conſidering what the opinion of the learnedeſt and the holieſt prelates were concerning this great queſtion. If we will believe St. * *Auſtin* (who was a credible perſon) no good man did allow it. *Nullis tamen bonis in Catholicâ hoc placet, ſi, uſque ad mortem in quenquam licèt hæreticum ſæviatur.* This was St. *Auſtin*'s final opinion; for he had firſt been of the mind that it was not honeſt to do any violence to miſperſuaded perſons; and when upon an accident happening in *Hippo* he had altered and retracted that part of the opinion, yet then alſo he excepted Death, and would by no means have any mere Opinion made capital. But for aught appears, St. *Auſtin* had greater reaſon to have retracted that retraction, than his firſt opinion. For his ſaying of *nullis bonis placet* was as true as the thing was reaſonable it ſhould be ſo. Witneſs thoſe known teſtimonies of [f] *Tertullian*, [g] *Cyprian*, [h] *Lactantius*, [i] *Hierom*, [k] *Severus Sulpitius*, [l] *Minutius*, [m] *Hilary*, [n] *Damaſcen*, [o] *Chryſoſtome*, [p] *Theophylact*, and [q] *Bernard*, and divers others, whom the reader may find quoted by the archbiſhop of *Spalato*, *Lib.* 7. de *rep. Eccleſ. cap.* 8.

X. Againſt this concurrent teſtimony my reading can furniſh me with no adverſary, nor contrary inſtances, but in *Atticus* of *Conſtantinople*, *Theodoſius* of

* *Socrat. l.* 1. *c.* 26. *Cont. Creſcon. Grammat. lib.* 3. *c.* 50. *vide etiam Epiſt.* 61. *ad dulcitium. et Epiſt.* 158. *et* 159. *et lib.* 1. *c.* 29. *cont. tit. petilian. vide etiam Socrat. lib.* 3. *c.* 3. *et c.* 29. *Lib.* 2. *cap.* 5. *retractat. vide Epiſt.* 48. *ad vincent. ſcript. poſt. retract. et Epiſt.* 50. *ad Bonifac.* [f] *Ad Scapulam.* [g] *Lib.* 3. *Ep.* 1. *Epiſt.* [h] *Lib.* 5. *c.* 20. [i] In cap. 13. Matth. et in cap. 2. *Hoſ.* [k] In vit: S. Martin. [l] Octav. [m] Cont. Auxent. Arr. [n] 3. Sect: C. 32. [o] In cap. 13. Matth. hom: 47. [p] In evang. Matth. [q] In verba Apoſt. fides exauditu.

Synada, in *Stacius* and *Urſæus* before reckoned. Only indeed ſome of the later popes of *Rome* began to be buſy and unmerciful, but it was then when themſelves were ſecure, and their intereſts great, and their temporal concernments highly conſiderable.

XI. For it is moſt true, and not amiſs to obſerve it, that no man who was under the ferula did ever think it lawful to have opinions forced, or hereticks put to death; and yet many men who themſelves have eſcaped the danger of a pile and a faggot, have changed their opinion juſt as the caſe was altered, that is, as themſelves were unconcerned in the ſuffering. * *Petilian*, *Parmenian*, and *Gaudentius*, by no means would allow it lawful, for themſelves were in danger, and were upon that ſide that is ill thought of and diſcountenanced: but † *Gregory* and ‡ *Leo*, popes of *Rome*, upon whoſe ſide the authority and advantages were, thought it lawful they ſhould be puniſhed and perſecuted; for themſelves were unconcerned in the danger of ſuffering. And therefore St. *Gregory* commends the exarch of *Ravenna*, for forcing them who diſſented from thoſe men who called themſelves the church. And there were ſome divines in the Lower *Germany*, who upon great reaſons ſpake againſt the tyranny of the inquiſition, and reſtraining propheſying, who yet when they had ſhaken off the Spaniſh yoke, began to perſecute their brethren. It was unjuſt in them, in all men unreaſonable and uncharitable, and often increaſes the error, but never leſſens the danger.

XII. But yet although the church, I mean, in her diſtinct and clerical capacity, was againſt

* *Apud Aug. lib.* 1. *c.* 7. *cont. Epiſt. Parmenian, & l.* 2. *c.* 10. *cont. tit. Petilian.* † *Epiſt.* 1. *ad Turbium.* ‡ *Lib.* 1. *ep.* 72.

deſtroying

deſtroying or puniſhing difference in opinion, till the Popes of Rome did ſuper-ſeminate and perſuade the contrary, yet the biſhops did perſuade the Emperors to make laws againſt hereticks, and to puniſh diſobedient perſons with fines, with impriſonment, with death and baniſhment reſpectively. This indeed calls us to a new account. For the churchmen might not proceed to blood nor corporal inflictions; but might they not deliver over to the ſecular arm, and perſuade temporal princes to do it? For this I am to ſay, that ſince it is notorious that the doctrine of the clergy was againſt puniſhing hereticks, the laws which were made by the emperors againſt them. might be for reſtraint of differing religion in order to the preſervation of the publick peace, which is too frequently violated by the diviſion of opinions. But I am not certain whether that was always the reaſon, or whether or no ſome biſhops of the court did not alſo ſerve their own ends in giving their princes ſuch untoward counſel; but we find the laws made ſeverally to ſeveral purpoſes, in divers caſes and with different ſeverity. * *Conſtantine* the emperor made a ſanction; *Ut parem cum fidelibus ii qui errant pacis & quietis fruitionem gaudentes accipiant.* The emperor *Gratian* decreed; *Ut quam quiſque vellet religionem ſequeretur*; *& conventus Eccleſiaſticos, ſemoto metu, omnes agerent.* But he excepted the Manichees, the Photinians, and Eunomians. † *Theodoſius* the elder made a law of death againſt the Anabaptiſts of his time, and baniſhed *Eunomius*, and againſt other erring perſons appointed a pecuniary mulct; but he did no executions ſo ſevere as his ſanctions, to ſhew they were made *in terrorem* only. So were the

* *Apud Euſeb. de vita Conſtant.* † *Vide Socrat. lib.* 7. c. 12.

laws of * *Valentinian* and *Martian*, decreeing *contra omnes qui prava docere tentant*, that they ſhould be put to death; ſo did † *Michael* the emperor; but *Juſtinian* only decreed baniſhment.

XIII. But whatever whiſpers ſome politiques might make to their princes, as the wiſeſt and holieſt did think it lawful for churchmen alone to do executions, ſo neither did they tranſmit ſuch perſons to the ſecular judicature. And therefore when the edict of *Macedonius* the preſident was ſo ambiguous, that it ſeemed to threaten death to hereticks, unleſs they recanted; St. *Auſtin* admoniſhed him, carefully to provide that no heretick ſhould be put to death, alledging it alſo not only to be unchriſtian, but illegal alſo, and not warranted by imperial conſtitutions; for before his time no laws were made for their being put to death: but however he prevailed, that *Macedonius* publiſhed another edict, more explicite, and leſs ſeemingly ſevere. But in his epiſtle to *Donatus*, the African proconſul, he is more confident and determinate, *Neceſſitate nobis impactâ & indictâ, ut potiùs occidi ab eis eligamus, quam eos occidendos veſtris judiciis ingeramus.*

XIV. But afterwards many got a trick of giving them over to the ſecular power, which at the beſt is no better than hypocriſy; removing envy from themſelves, and laying it upon others, a refuſing to do that in external act, which they do in counſel and approbation: which is a tranſmitting the act to another, and retaining a proportion of guilt unto themſelves, even their own and the others too. I end this with the ſaying of ‡ *Chryſoſtome*, *Dogmata impia & quæ ab hæreticis*

* *Vid. Cod. de heretic. L. manichees. & leg. Arriani, & l. Quicunque.* † *Apud Paulum Diac. l.* 16. *& l.* 24. ‡ *Serm. de Anathemate.*

profecta

profecta ſunt, arguere & anathematizare oportet; hominibus autem parcendum & pro ſalute eorum orandum.

SECT. XV.

How far the church or governors may act to the reſtraining falſe or differing opinions.

I. BUT although heretical perſons are not to be deſtroyed, yet hereſy being a work of the fleſh, and all hereticks criminal perſons, whoſe acts and doctrine have influence upon communities of men whether eccleſiaſtical or civil; the governors of the republic, or church, reſpectively are to do their duties in reſtraining thoſe miſchiefs which may happen to their ſeveral charges, for whoſe indemnity they are anſwerable. And therefore, according to the effect or malice of the doctrine or the perſon, ſo the cognizance of them belongs to ſeveral judicatures. If it be falſe doctrine in any capacity, and doth miſchief in any ſenſe, or teaches ill life in any inſtance, or encourages evil in any particular, δει επιστομιζειν, theſe men muſt be ſilenced, they muſt be convinced by ſound doctrine, and put to ſilence by ſpiritual evidence, and reſtrained by authority eccleſiaſtical, that is, by ſpiritual cenſures, according as it ſeems neceſſary to him who is moſt concerned in the regimen of the church. For all this we have precept and precedent apoſtolical, and much reaſon. For by thus doing, the governor of the church uſes all that authority that is competent, and all the means that are reaſonable, and that proceeding which is regular, that he may diſcharge his cure and ſecure his flock. And

that he poſſibly may be deceived in judging a doctrine to be heretical, and by conſequence the perſon excommunicated ſuffer injury, is no argument againſt the reaſonableneſs of the proceeding. For all the injury that is, is viſible and in appearance, and ſo is his crime. Judges muſt judge according to their beſt reaſon guided by law of God as their rule, and by evidence and appearance as their beſt inſtrument; and they can judge no better. If the judges be good and prudent, the error of proceeding will not be great, nor ordinary, and there can be no better eſtabliſhment of human judicature, than is a fallible proceeding upon an infallible ground; and if the judgment of hereſy be made by eſtimate and proportion of the opinion to a good or a bad life reſpectively, ſuppoſing an error in the deduction, there will be no malice in the concluſion; and that he endeavours to ſecure piety, according to the beſt of his underſtanding, and yet did miſtake in his proceeding, is only an argument that he did his duty after the manner of men, poſſibly with the piety of a ſaint, though not with the underſtanding of an angel. And the little inconvenience that happens to the perſon injuriouſly judged is abundantly made up in the excellency of the diſcipline, the goodneſs of the example, the care of the publick, and all thoſe great influences upon the manners of men, which derive from ſuch an act ſo publickly conſigned. But ſuch publick judgment in matters of opinion muſt be ſeldom and curious, and never but to ſecure piety, and a holy life; for in matters ſpeculative, as all determinations are fallible, ſo ſcarce any of them are to purpoſe, nor ever able to make compenſation on either ſide, either for the publick fraction, or the particular injuſtice, if it ſhould ſo happen, in the cenſure.

II.

II. But then as the church may proceed thus far, yet no chriſtian man, or community of men may proceed farther. For if they be deceived in their judgment and cenſure, and yet have paſſed only ſpiritual cenſures, they are totally ineffectual, and come to nothing, there is no effect remaining upon the ſoul, and ſuch cenſures are not to meddle with the body ſo much as indirectly. But if any other judgment paſs upon perſons erring, ſuch judgments whoſe effects remain, if the perſon be unjuſtly cenſured, nothing will anſwer and make compenſation for ſuch injuries. If a perſon be excommunicated unjuſtly, it will do him no hurt; but if he be killed or diſmembred unjuſtly, that cenſure and infliction is not made ineffectual by his innocence; he is certainly killed and diſmembred. So that as the church's authority in ſuch caſes ſo reſtrained and made prudent, cautelous, and orderly, is juſt and competent: ſo the proceeding is reaſonable, it is provident for the publick, and the inconveniences that may fall upon particulars ſo little, as that the publick benefit makes ample compenſation, ſo long as the proceeding is but ſpiritual.

III. This diſcourſe is in the caſe of ſuch opinions, which by the formal rules are formal hereſies, and upon practical inconveniences. But for matters of queſtion, which have not in them an enmity to the publick tranquility, as the republick hath nothing to do, upon the ground of all the former diſcourſes; ſo if the church meddle with them where they do not derive into ill life, either in the perſon or in the conſequent, or elſe are deſtructions of the foundation of religion, which is all one, for that thoſe fundamental articles are of greateſt neceſſity in order to a virtuous and godly life, which is wholly built upon them, (and therefore are principally neceſſary.) If

ſhe meddle further, otherwiſe then by preaching, and conferring, and exhortation, ſhe becomes tyrannical in her government, makes herſelf an immediate judge of conſciences and perſuaſions, lords it over their faith, deſtroys unity, and charity; and as if he that dogmatizes the opinion becomes criminal, if he trouble the church with an immodeſt, peeviſh, and pertinacious propoſal of his article, not ſimply neceſſary; ſo the church does not do her duty, if ſhe ſo condemn it *pro tribunali*, as to injoin him and all her ſubjects to believe the contrary. And as there may be pertinacy in doctriue, ſo there may be pertinacy in judging, and both are faults. The peace of the church and the unity of her doctrine is beſt conſerved, when it is judged by the proportion it hath to that rule of unity which the apoſtles gave, that is, *the Creed* for articles of meer belief, and the precepts of Jeſus Chriſt, and the practical rules of piety, which are moſt plain and eaſy, and without controverſy, ſet down in the Goſpels, and writings of the Apoſtles. But to multiply articles, and adopt them into the family of faith, and to require aſſent to ſuch articles, which (as St. *Paul*'s phraſe is) are of doubtful diſputation; equal to that aſſent we give to matters of faith, is to build a tower upon the top of a bulruſh, and the further the effects of ſuch proceedings extend, the worſe they are; the very making ſuch a law is unreaſonable, the inflicting ſpiritual cenſures upon them that cannot do ſo much violence to their underſtanding as to obey it, is unjuſt and ineffectual; but to puniſh the perſon with death, or with corporal infliction, is indeed effectual, but it is therefore tyrannical.——We have ſeen what the church may do towards reſtraining falſe or differing opinions; next I ſhall conſider by way of corollary,

corallary, what the prince may do as for his intereſt, and only in ſecuring his people, and ſerving the ends of true religion.



SECT. XVI.

Whether it be lawful for a Prince to give toleration to ſeveral Religions.

FOR upon theſe very grounds we may eaſily give account of that great queſtion, Whether it be lawful for a prince to give toleration to ſeveral religions?

For firſt, it is a great fault that men will call the *ſeveral Sects* of Chriſtians by the names of *ſeveral Religions.* The religion of JESUS CHRIST is the form of ſound doctrine and wholſome words, which is ſet down in ſcripture indefinitely, actually conveyed to us by plain places, and ſeparated, as for the queſtion of neceſſary or not neceſſary, by the ſymbol of the apoſtles. Thoſe impertinencies which the wantonneſs and vanity of men have commenced, which their intereſts have promoted, which ſerve not truth ſo much as their own ends, are far from being diſtinct religions; for matters of opinion are no parts of the worſhip of God, nor in order to it, but as they promote obedience to his commandments; and when they contribute towards it, are in that proportion as they contribute parts and actions, and minute particulars of that religion to whoſe ends they do, or pretend to ſerve. And ſuch are all the ſects, and all the pretences of chriſtians, but pieces and minutes of chriſtianity, if they ſerve the great end, as every man for his own ſect and intereſt believes for his ſhare it does.

II. 2. Toleration hath a double ſenſe or purpoſe; for ſometimes by it men underſtand a publick licence and exerciſe of a ſect; ſometimes it is only an indemnity of the perſons privately to convene and opine as they ſee cauſe, and as they mean to anſwer to God. Both theſe are very much to the ſame purpoſe, unleſs ſome perſons whom we are bound to ſatisfy be ſcandalized; and then the prince is bound to do, as he is bound to ſatisfy. To God it is all one. For abſtracting from the offence of perſons, which is to be conſidered, juſt as our obligation is to content the perſons, it is all one whether we indulge them in meeting publickly or privately, to do actions of religion, concerning which We are not perſuaded that they are truly holy. To God it is juſt one to be in the dark and in the light, the thing is the ſame, only the circumſtance of publick and private is different; which cannot be concerned in any thing, nor can it concern any thing, but the matter of ſcandal and relation to the minds and fantaſies of certain perſons.

III. 3. So that to tolerate is not to perſecute. And the queſtion whether the prince may tolerate divers perſuaſions, is no more than whether he may lawfully perſecute any man for not being of his opinion. Now in this caſe he is juſt ſo to tolerate diverſity of perſuaſions, as he is to tolerate publick actions; for no opinion is judicable; and no perſon puniſhable, but for a ſin; and if his opinion by reaſon of its managing, or its effect, be a ſin in itſelf, or become a ſin to the perſon; then as he is to do towards other ſins, ſo to that opinion or man ſo opening. But to believe ſo, or not ſo, when there is no more but mere believing, is not in his power to enjoin, therefore not to puniſh. And it is not only lawful to tolerate diſagreeing perſuaſions, but the authority of God only

only is competent to take notice of it, and infallible to determine it, and fit to judge; and therefore no human authority is ſufficient to do all thoſe things, which can juſtify the inflicting temporal puniſhments upon ſuch as do not conform in their perſuaſions to a rule or authority, which is not only fallible, but ſuppoſed by the diſagreeing perſon to be actually deceived.

IV. But I conſider that in the toleration of a different opinion, religion is not properly and immediately concerned, ſo as in any degree to be endangered. For it may be ſafe in diverſity of perſuaſions, and it is alſo a part of * chriſtian religion that the liberty of mens conſciences ſhould be preſerved in all things, where God hath not ſet a limit and made a reſtraint; that the ſoul of the man ſhould be free, and acknowledge no maſter but Jeſus Chriſt; that matters ſpiritual ſhould not be reſtrained by puniſhments corporal; that the ſame meekneſs and charity ſhould be preſerved in the promotion of chriſtianity, that gave it foundation and increment, and firmneſs in its firſt publication; that concluſions ſhould not be more dogmatical, than the virtual reſolution and efficacy of the premiſes: And that the perſons ſhould not more certainly be condemned, than their opinions confuted; and laſtly, that the infirmities of men and difficulties of things ſhould be both put in balance to make abatement in the definitive ſentence againſt mens perſons. But then becauſe toleration of opinions is not properly a queſtion of religion, it may be a queſtion of policy: And although a man may be a good chriſtian, though he believe an error

* *Humani juris & naturalis poteſtatis, unicuique quod putaverit, colere. Sed nec religionis eſt cogere religionem, quæ ſuſpici ſponte debet, non vi.* Tertul. ad Scapulam.

not

not fundamental, and not directly or evidently impious; yet his opinion may accidentally disturb the publick peace through the over activeness of the person, and the confidence of the belief and the opinion of its appendent necessity; and therefore toleration of differing persuasions in these cases is to be considered upon political grounds; and is just so to be admitted or denied, as the opinions or toleration of them may consist with the publick and necessary ends of government. Only this: As christian princes must look to the interest of their government, so especially must they consider the interests of christianity, and not call every conviction or modest discovery of an established error, by the name of disturbance of the peace. For it is very likely that the peevishness and impatience of contradiction in the governors may break the peace. *Let them remember but the gentleness of christianity*, the liberty of conscience which ought to be preserved, and let them do justice to the persons, whoever they be that are peevish; provided that no man's person be over-borne with prejudice. For if it be necessary for all men to subscribe to the present established religion, by the same reason at another time a man may be bound to subscribe to the contradictory, and so to all religions in the world. And they only, who by their too much confidence entitle God to all their fancies, and make them to be questions of religion, and evidences for heaven, or consignations to hell, they only think this doctrine unreasonable, and they are the men that first disturb the church's peace, and then think there is no appeasing the tumult but by getting the victory. But they that consider things wisely, understand, that since salvation and damnation depend not upon impertinences, and yet that publick peace and tranquillity may, the prince

prince is in this caſe to ſeek how to ſecure government, and the iſſues and intentions of that, while there is in theſe caſes directly no inſecurity to religion, unleſs by the accidental uncharitableneſs of them that diſpute: which uncharitableneſs is alſo much prevented when the publick peace is ſecured, and no perſon is on either ſide engaged upon * revenge, or troubled with diſgrace, or vexed with puniſhments by any decretory ſentence againſt him. It was the ſaying of a wiſe ſtateſman (I mean *Thuanus*) *Hæretici qui pace datâ factionibus ſcinduntur, perſecutione uniuntur contra Remp.* If you perſecute hereticks or diſcrepants, they unite themſelves as to a common defence: If you permit them, they divide themſelves upon private intereſt; and the rather, if this intereſt was an ingredient of the opinion.

V. The ſum is this, it concerns the duty of a prince, becauſe it concerns the honour of God, that all vices and every part of ill life be diſcountenanced and reſtrained: and therefore in relation to that, opinions are to be dealt with. For the underſtanding being to direct the will, and opinions to guide our practices, they are conſiderable only as they teach impiety and vice, as they either diſhonour God, or diſobey him. Now all ſuch doctrines are to be condemned; but for the perſons preaching ſuch doctrines, if they neither juſtify nor approve the pretended conſequences which are certainly impious, they are to be ſeparated from that conſideration. But if they know ſuch conſequences and allow them, or if they do not ſtay till the doctrines produce impiety, but take ſin before hand, and manage them impiouſly in any ſenſe; or if either themſelves or their doc-

* *Dextera præcipue capit indulgentia mentes, Aſperitas odium ſæva ue bella parit.*

trine

trine do really and without colour or feigned pretext, disturb the publick peace and just interests, * they are not to be suffered. In all other cases it is not only lawful to permit them, but it is also necessary, that princes and all in authority should not persecute discrepant opinions. And in such cases, wherein persons not otherwise incompetent are bound to reprove an error, (as they are in many) in all these if the prince make restraint, he hinders men from doing their duty, and from obeying the laws of JESUS CHRIST.

SECT. XVII.

Of compliance with disagreeing persons, or weak consciences in general.

I. UPON these grounds it remains that we reduce this doctrine to practical conclusions, and consider among the differing sects and opinions which trouble these parts of Christendom, and come into our concernment, which sects of christians are to be tolerated, and how far? and which are to be restrained and punished in their several proportions?

II. The first consideration is, that since diversity of opinions more concern publick peace than religion, what is to be done to persons, who dis-

* *Extat prudens monitum Mecænatis apud Dionem Cassium ad Augustum in hæc verba. Eos vero qui in divinis aliquid innovant, odio habe, & coerce, non Deorum solum causa: sed quia nova numina hi tales introducentes multos impellunt ad mutationem rerum. Unde conjurationes seditiones, Conciliabula existunt, res profecto minime conducibiles principatui. Et legibus quoque expressum est, quod in religionem committitur, in omnium fertur injuriam.*

obey

obey a publick ſanction upon a true allegation; that they cannot believe it to be lawful to obey ſuch conſtitutions, although they diſbelieve them upon inſufficient grounds, that is, whether in *conſtituta lege* diſagreeing perſons or weak conſciences are to be complied with, and their diſobeying and diſagreeing tolerated?

III. 1. In this queſtion there is no diſtinction can be made between perſons truly weak, and but pretending ſo. For all that pretend to it, are to be allowed the ſame liberty whatſoever it be; for no man's ſpirit is known to any, but to god and himſelf: and therefore pretences and realities in this caſe, are both alike in order to the publick toleration. And this very thing is one argument to perſuade a negative. For the chief thing in this caſe is the concernment of publick government, which is then moſt of all violated, when what may prudently be permitted to ſome purpoſes, may be demanded to many more; and the piety of the laws abuſed to the impiety of other mens ends. And if laws be made ſo malleable, as to comply with weak conſciences, he that hath a mind to diſobey, is made impregnable againſt the coercive power of the law, by this pretence. For a weak conſcience ſignifies nothing in this caſe, but a diſlike of the law upon a contrary perſuaſion. For if ſome weak conſciences do obey the law, and others do not, it is not their weakneſs indefinitely that is the cauſe of it, but a definite and particular perſuaſion to the contrary. So that if ſuch a pretence be excuſe ſufficient from obeying, then the law is a ſanction obliging every one to obey that hath a mind to it, and he that hath not, may chooſe; that is, it is no law at all, for he that hath a mind to it may do it if there be no law, and he that hath no mind to it need for all the law.

IV.

IV. And therefore the wit of man cannot prudently frame a law of that temper and expedience, but either he muſt loſe the formality of a law, and neither have power coercive nor obligatory, but *ad arbitrium inferiorum*; or elſe it cannot, antecedently to the particular caſe, give leave to any ſort of men to diſagree or diſobey.

V. 2. Suppoſe that a law be made with great reaſon, ſo as to ſatisfy divers perſons, pious and prudent, that it complies with the neceſſity of government, and promotes the intereſt of God's ſervice and publick order; it may eaſily be imagined that theſe perſons, who are obedient ſons of the church, may be as zealous for the publick order and diſcipline of the church, as others for their opinion againſt it, and may be as much ſcandalized if diſobedience be tolerated, as others are if the law be exacted; and what ſhall be done in this caſe? Both ſorts of men, cannot be complied with, becauſe, as theſe pretend to be offended at the law, and by conſequence (if they underſtand the conſequences of their own opinion) at them that obey the law: ſo the others are juſtly offended at them that unjuſtly diſobey it. If therefore there be any on the right ſide as confident and zealous as they who are on the wrong ſide, then the diſagreeing perſons are not to be complied with; to avoid giving offence; for if they be, offence is given to better perſons, and ſo the miſchief, which ſuch complying ſeeks to prevent, is made greater and more unjuſt; obedience is diſcouraged, and diſobedience is legally canonized, for the reſult of a holy and a tender conſcience.

VI. 3. Such complying with the diſagreeings of a ſort of men, is the total overthrow of all diſcipline, and it is better to make no laws of publick worſhip, than to reſcind them in the very conſtitution:

and there can be no end in making the ſanction, but to make the law ridiculous, and the authority contemptible. For to ſay that complying with weak conſciences in the very framing of a law of diſcipline, is the way to preſerve unity, were all one as to ſay, To take away all laws is the beſt way to prevent diſobedience. In ſuch matters of indifferency, the beſt way of cementing the fraction, is to unite the parts in the authority; for then the queſtion is but one, *viz.* Whether the authority muſt be obeyed or not? But if a permiſſion be given of diſputing the particulars, the queſtions become next to infinite. A mirrour when it is broken repreſents the object multiplyed and divided: but if it be entire, and through one centre tranſmit the ſpecies to the eye, the viſion is one and natural. Laws are the mirrour in which men are to dreſs and compoſe their actions; and therefore muſt not be broken with ſuch clauſes of exception which may without remedy be abuſed to the prejudice of authority, and peace, and all human ſanctions. And I have known in ſome churches that this pretence hath been nothing but a deſign to diſcredit the law, to diſmantle the authority that made it, to raiſe their own credit, and a trophy of their zeal, to make it a characteriſtick note of a ſect, and the cognizance of holy perſons; and yet the men that claimed exemption from the laws, upon pretence of having weak conſciences, if in hearty expreſſion you had told them ſo to their heads, they would have ſpit in your face, and were ſo far from confeſſing themſelves weak, that they thought themſelves able to give laws to chriſtendom; to inſtruct the greateſt clerks, and to catechiſe the church herſelf; and which is the worſt of all, they who were perpetually clamorous, that the ſeverity of the laws ſhould ſlacken as to their par-

ticular, and in matter indifferent (in which, if the church hath any authority, ſhe hath power to make laws) to indulge a leave to them to do as they liſt; yet were the moſt imperious amongſt men, moſt decretory in their ſentences, and moſt impatient of any diſagreeing from them though in the leaſt minute and particular: whereas by all the juſtice of the world, they who perſuade ſuch a compliance in matters of fact, and of ſo little queſtion, ſhould not deny to tolerate perſons, that differ in queſtions of great difficulty and conteſtation.

VII. 4. But yet ſince all things almoſt in the world have been made matters of diſpute, and the will of ſome men, and the malice of others, and the infinite induſtry and pertinacy of conteſting, and reſolution to conquer, have abuſed ſome perſons innocently into a perſuaſion, that even the laws themſelves though never ſo prudently conſtituted, are ſuperſtitious or impious; ſuch perſons, who are otherwiſe pious, humble and religious, are not to be deſtroyed for ſuch matters, which in themſelves are not of concernment to ſalvation; and neither are ſo accidentally, to ſuch men and in ſuch caſes, where they are innocently abuſed, and they err without purpoſe and deſign. And therefore, if there be a publick diſpoſition in ſome perſons to diſlike laws of a certain quality, if it be foreſeen, it is to be conſidered *in lege dicendâ*; and whatever inconvenience or particular offence is foreſeen, is either to be directly avoided in the law, or elſe a compenſation in the excellency of the law, and certain advantages, made to out-weigh their pretenſions: But *in lege jam dictâ*, becauſe there may be a neceſſity ſome perſons ſhould have a liberty indulged them, it is neceſſary that the governors of the church ſhould be intruſted with a power to conſider the particular caſe,

caſe, and indulge a liberty to the perſon, and grant perſonal diſpenſations. This I ſay is to be done at ſeveral times, upon particular inſtance, upon ſingular conſideration, and new emergencies. But that a whole kind of men, ſuch a kind to which all men without poſſibility of being confuted may pretend, ſhould at once in the very frame of the law be permitted to diſobey, is to nullify the law, to deſtroy diſcipline, and to hallow diſobedience; it takes away the obliging part of the law, and makes that the thing enacted ſhall not be enjoined, but tolerated only: it deſtroys unity and uniformity, which to preſerve was the very end of ſuch laws of diſcipline: it bends the rule to the thing which is to be ruled, ſo that the law obeys the ſubject, not the ſubject the law: it is to make a law for particulars, not upon general reaſon and congruity, againſt the prudence and deſign of all laws in the world, and abſolutely without the example of any church in chriſtendom; it prevents no ſcandal, for ſome will be ſcandalized at the authority itſelf, ſome at the complying, and remiſsneſs of diſcipline, and ſeveral men at matters, and upon ends contradictory: all which cannot, ſome ought not, to be complied withal.

VIII. 6. The ſum is this, The end of the laws of diſcipline is an immediate order to the conſervation and ornament of the publick, and therefore the laws muſt not ſo tolerate, as by conſerving perſons to deſtroy themſelves and the publick benefit, but if there be cauſe for it, they muſt be caſſated; or if there be no ſufficient cauſe, the complyings muſt be ſo as may beſt preſerve the particulars in conjunction with the publick end, which becauſe it is primarily intended, is of greateſt conſideration. But the particulars, whether of caſe or perſon, are to be conſidered occa-

ſionally and emergently by the judges, but cannot antecedently and regularly be determined by a law.

IX. But this ſort of men is of ſo general pretence, that all laws and all judges may eaſily be abuſed by them. Thoſe ſects which are ſignified by a name, which have a ſyſtem of articles, a body of profeſſion, may be more clearly determined in their queſtion concerning the lawfulneſs of permitting their profeſſions and aſſemblies. I ſhall inſtance in two, which are moſt troubleſome and moſt diſliked; and by an account made of theſe, we may make judgment what may be done towards others, whoſe errors are not apprehended of ſo great malignity. The men I mean are the Anabaptiſts, and the Papiſts.

SECT. XVIII.

A particular conſideration of the opinions of the Anabaptiſts.

I. IN the Anabaptiſts I conſider only their two capital opinions, the one againſt the Baptiſm of Infants, the other againſt Magiſtracy: and becauſe they produce different judgments and various effects, all their other fancies, which vary as the moon does, may ſtand or fall in their proportion and likeneſs to theſe.

II. And firſt I conſider their denying Baptiſm to Infants; although it be a doctrine juſtly condemned by moſt ſort of chriſtians, upon great grounds of reaſon; yet poſſibly their defence may be ſo great, as to take off much, and rebate the edge of their adverſaries aſſault. It will be neither unpleaſant nor unprofitable to draw a ſhort ſcheme of plea for each party, the reſult of which poſſibly may

may be, that though they be deceived, yet they have ſo great excuſe on their ſide, that their error is not impudent or vincible.

The Baptiſm of Infants reſts wholly upon this diſcourſe.

III. When God made a covenant with Abraham for himſelf and his poſterity, into which the gentiles were reckoned by ſpiritual adoption, he for the preſent conſigned that covenant with the ſacrament of circumciſion. The extent of which rite, was to all his family, from the *Major domo* to the *Proſelytus domicilio*, and to infants of eight days old. Now the very nature of this covenant being a covenant of faith for its formality, and with all faithful people for the object; and circumciſion being a ſeal of this covenant; if ever any rite do ſupervene to conſign the ſame covenant, that rite muſt acknowlege circumciſion for its type and precedent. And this the apoſtle tells us in expreſs doctrine. Now the nature of types, is to give ſome proportion to its ſucceſſor the antitype, and they both being ſeals of the ſame righteouſneſs of faith, it will not eaſily be found where theſe two ſeals have any ſuch diſtinction in their nature or purpoſes, as to appertain to perſons of differing capacity, and not equally concern all: and this argument was thought of ſo much force by ſome of thoſe excellent men, who were biſhops in the primitive church, that a good biſhop wrote an epiſtle to St. *Cyprian*, to know of him whether or no it were lawful to baptize infants before the eighth day, becauſe the type of baptiſm was miniſtered in that circumciſion; he in his diſcourſe ſuppoſing that the firſt rite was a direction to the ſecond, which prevailed with him ſo far as to believe it to limit every circumſtance.

IV. And not only this type, but the acts of Chriſt, which were previous to the inſtitution of

baptiſm, did prepare our underſtanding by ſuch impreſſes, as were ſufficient to produce ſuch perſuaſion in us, that Chriſt intended this miniſtry for the actual advantage of infants, as well as of perſons of underſtanding. For Chriſt commanded that children ſhould be brought unto him; he took them in his arms, he impoſed hands on them and bleſſed them; and without queſtion did by ſuch acts of favour conſign his love to them, and put them to a capacity of an eternal participation of it. And poſſibly the invitation which Chriſt made to all to come to him, all them that are heavy laden, did in its proportion concern infants as much as others, if they were guilty of original ſin, and if that ſin be a burthen, and preſs them to any ſpiritual danger or inconvenience. And it is all the reaſon in the world, that ſince the grace of Chriſt is as large as the prevarication of *Adam*, all they who are made guilty by the firſt *Adam*, ſhould be cleanſed by the ſecond. But as they are guilty by another man's act, ſo they ſhould be brought to the font, to be purified by others, there being the ſame proportion of reaſon, that by others acts, they ſhould be relieved, who were in danger of periſhing by the act of others. And therefore St. * *Auſtin* argues excellently to this purpoſe. *Accommodat illis mater Eccleſia aliorum pedes, ut veniant; aliorum cor, ut credant, aliorum linguam ut fateantur; ut quoniam quod ægri ſunt, alio peccante prægravantur, ſic cum ſani fiant alio confitente ſalventur.* And † *Juſtin Martyr*, ἀξιονλαι δη των δια τε βαπτισμαλος ἀγαθων τα βρεφη τη πιςει των προσφερονταν αὐλα τω βαπτισμαλι.

V. But whether they have original ſin or no, yet take them *in puris naturalibus*, they cannot go to God, or attain to eternity: to which they were intended in their firſt being and creation, and

* Serm. 10. de verb. Apoſt. † Reſp. ad Orthodoxos.

therefore

therefore much less since their naturals are impaired by the curse on human nature procured by *Adam*'s prevarication. And if a natural agent cannot *in puris naturalibus* attain to heaven, which is a supernatural end, much less when it is loaden with accidental and grievous impediments. Now then, since the only way revealed to us of acquiring heaven is by Jesus Christ; and the first inlet into christianity, and access to him, is by baptism, as appears by the perpetual analogy of the New Testament; either infants are not persons capable of that end, which is the perfection of human nature, and to which the soul of man in its being made immortal was essentially designed, and so are miserable and deficient from the very end of humanity, if they die before the use of reason; or else they must be brought to Christ by the Church doors, that is, by the font and waters of baptism.

VI. And in reason, it seems more pregnant and plausible that infants rather then men of understanding should be baptized: for since the efficacy of the sacraments depends upon divine institution and immediate benediction, and that they produce their effects independently upon man, in them that do not hinder their operation; since infants cannot, by any act of their own, promote the hope of their own salvation, which men of reason and choice may, by acts of virtue and election; it is more agreeable to the goodness of God, the honour and excellency of the sacrament, and the necessity of its institution, that it should in infants supply the want of human acts and free obedience. Which the very thing it self seems to say it does, because its effect is from God, and requires nothing on man's part, but that its efficacy be not hindered: and then in infants, the disposition is equal, and the necessity more, they

eannot *ponere obicem*, and by the ſame reaſon cannot do other acts, which without the ſacraments do advantages towards our hopes of heaven, and therefore have more need to be ſupplied by an act, and an inſtitution divine and ſupernatural.

VII. And this is not only neceſſary in reſpect of the condition of infants in capacity, to do acts of grace, but alſo in obedience to divine precept. For Chriſt made a law, whoſe ſanction is with an excluſive negative to them that are not baptized; [*Unleſs a man be born of water and of the ſpirit, he ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*;] If then infants have a capacity of being co-heirs with Chriſt in the kingdom of his father, as Chriſt affirms they have, by ſaying [*for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven*] then there is a neceſſity that they ſhould be brought to baptiſm, there being an abſolute excluſion of all perſons unbaptized, and all perſons not ſpiritual, from the kingdom of heaven.

VIII. But indeed it is a deſtruction of all the hopes and happineſs of infants, a denying to them an exemption from the final condition of beaſts and inſects, or elſe a deſigning of them to a worſe miſery, to ſay that God hath not appointed ſome external or internal means of bringing them to an eternal happineſs: internal they have none; for grace being an improvement and heightning of the faculties of nature, in order to a heightened and ſupernatural end, grace hath no influence or efficacy upon their faculties, who can do no natural acts of underſtanding: and if there be no external means, then they are deſtitute of all hopes, and poſſibilities of ſalvation.

IX. But thanks be to God, he hath provided better and told us accordingly, for he hath made a promiſe of the holy Ghoſt to infants as well as to men: *The promiſe is made to you and to your children*,

dren, ſaid St. *Peter*; *The promiſe of the father, the promiſe that he would ſend the holy Ghoſt.* Now if you aſk how this promiſe ſhall be conveyed to our children, we have an expreſs out of the ſame ſermon of St. * *Peter*, *Be baptized, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the holy Ghoſt*; ſo that therefore becauſe the holy Ghoſt is promiſed, and baptiſm is the means of receiving the promiſe, therefore baptiſm pertains to them, to whom the promiſe, which is the effect of baptiſm, appertains. And that we may not think this argument is fallacious, or of human collection, obſerve that it is the argument of the ſame apoſtle in expreſs terms: for in the caſe of *Cornelius* and his family, he juſtified his proceeding by this very medium, *Shall we deny baptiſm to them, who have received the gift of the holy Ghoſt as well as we?* Which diſcourſe if it be reduced to form of argument ſays this; they that are capable of the ſame grace are receptive of the ſame ſign; but then (to make the ſyllogiſm up with an aſſumption proper to our preſent purpoſe) infants are capable of the ſame grace, that is, of the holy Ghoſt (for the promiſe is made to our children, as well as to us; and St. *Paul* ſays, the children of believing parents are holy, and therefore have the holy Ghoſt, who is the fountain of holineſs and ſanctification) therefore they are to receive the ſign and the ſeal of it, that is, the ſacrament of baptiſm.

X. And indeed, ſince God entered into a covenant with the Jews, which did alſo actually involve their children, and gave them a ſign to eſtabliſh the covenant, and its appendant promiſe; either God does not ſo much love the church as he did the ſynagogue, and the mercies of the goſpel are more reſtrained, than the mer-

* Act. 2. 38. 39.

cies

cies of the law, God having made a covenant with the infants of *Iſrael*, and none with the children of chriſtian parents; or if he hath, yet we want the comfort of its conſignation; and unleſs our children are to be baptized, and ſo intitled to the promiſes of the new covenant, as the Jewiſh babes were by circumciſion, this mercy which appertains to infants is ſo ſecret and undeclared and unconſigned, that we want much of that mercy and outward teſtimony which gave Them comfort and aſſurance.

XI. And in proportion to theſe precepts and revelations was the Practice Apoſtolical: for they (to whom Chriſt gave in precept to make diſciples all nations baptizing them, and knew that nations without children never were, and that therefore they were paſſively concerned in that commiſſion,) baptized whole families, particularly that of *Stephanus* and divers others, in which it is more than probable there were ſome minors if not ſucking babes. And this practice did deſcend upon the church in after ages by tradition apoſtolical: of this we have ſufficient teſtimony from * *Origen*, *Pro hoc Eccleſia ab Apoſtolis traditionem accepit, etiam parvulis baptiſmum dare*: And St. † *Auſtin*, *Hoc Eccleſia à majorum fide percepit*: And generally all writers (as ‡ *Calvin* ſays) affirm the ſame thing: For *nullus eſt Scriptor tam vetuſtus, qui non ejus originem ad Apoſtolorum ſæculum pro certo referat.* From hence the concluſion is, that infants ought to be baptized; that it is ſimply neceſſary, that they who deny it are hereticks, and ſuch are not to be endured, becauſe they deny to infants hopes, and take away the poſſibility of their ſalvation, which is revealed to us on no

* In Rom. 6. tom. 2. pag. 543. † Serm. 10. de verb. Apoſt. c. 2. ‡ 4. Inſtit. cap. 16. §. 8.

other

other condition, of which they are capable, but baptiſm. For by the inſinuation of the type, by the action of Chriſt, by the title infants have to heaven, by the precept of the goſpel, by the energy of the promiſe, by the reaſonableneſs of the thing, by the infinite neceſſity on the infants part, by the practice apoſtolical, by their tradition, and the univerſal practice of the church; by all theſe God and good people proclaim the lawfulneſs, the conveniency, and the neceſſity, of infants baptiſm.

XII. To all this, the *Anabaptiſt* gives a ſoft and gentle anſwer: that it is a goodly harangue, which upon ſtrict examination will come to nothing; that it pretends fairly and ſignifies little; that ſome of theſe allegations are falſe, ſome impertinent, and all the reſt inſufficient.

XIII. For the argument from circumciſion, ſay they, is invalid upon infinite conſiderations; figures and types prove nothing, unleſs a commandment go along with them, or ſome expreſs to ſignify ſuch to be their purpoſe: for the deluge of waters and the ark of *Noah* were a figure of baptiſm, ſaid *Peter*; and if therefore the circumſtances of one ſhould be drawn to the other, we ſhould make baptiſm a prodigy rather than a right: the Paſchal Lamb was a type of the euchariſt, which ſucceeds the other as baptiſm does to circumciſion; but becauſe there was in the manducation of the Paſchal Lamb, no preſcription of ſacramental drink, ſhall we thence conclude that the euchariſt is to be miniſtred but in one kind? And even in the very inſtance of this argument, ſuppoſing a correſpondence of analogy between circumciſion and baptiſm, yet there is no correſpondence of identity: for although it were granted that both of them did conſign the covenant of faith, yet there is nothing in the circumſtance

cumſtance of childrens being circumciſed, which ſo concerns that myſtery, but that it might very well be given to children, and yet baptiſm only to men of reaſon; becauſe circumciſion left a character in the fleſh, which being imprinted upon infants did its work to them when they came to age; and ſuch a character was neceſſary, becauſe there was no word added to the ſign: but baptiſm imprints nothing that remains on the body; and if it leave a character at all, it is upon the ſoul; to which alſo the word is added which is as much a part of the ſacrament as the ſign itſelf is; for both which reaſons, it is requiſite that the perſons baptized ſhould be capable of reaſon, that they may be capable both of the word of the ſacrament, and the impreſs made upon the ſpirit: ſince therefore the reaſon of this parity does wholly fail, their is nothing left to infer a neceſſity of complying in this circumſtance of age, any more than in the other annexes of the type: and the caſe is clear in the biſhop's queſtion to * *Cyprian*, for why ſhall not infants be baptized juſt upon the eighth day, as well as circumciſed? If the correſpondence of the rites be an argument to infer one circumſtance, which is impertinent and accidental to the myſteriouſneſs of the rite, why ſhall it not infer all? And then alſo females muſt not be baptized, becauſe they were not circumciſed: but it were more proper, if we would underſtand it right, to proſecute the analogy from the type to the anti-type by way of letter and ſpirit, and ſignification; and as circumciſion figures baptiſm, ſo alſo the adjuncts of the circumciſion ſhall ſignify ſomething, ſpiritual, in the adherencies of baptiſm: and therefore as infants were circumciſed, ſo ſpiritual infants ſhall

* 3. Epiſt. 8. ad Fidum.

be

be baptized, which is ſpiritual circumciſion; for therefore babes had the miniſtry of the type, to ſignify that we muſt when we give our names to Chriſt become νηπιοι ἐν κακιᾳ children in malice, [*for unleſs you become like one of theſe little ones, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*] ſaid our bleſſed Saviour, and then the type is made compleat. And this ſeems to have been the ſenſe of the primitive church; for in the age next to the Apoſtles they gave to all baptized perſons milk and honey, to repreſent to them their duty; that though in age and underſtanding they were men, yet they were babes in Chriſt, and children in malice. But to infer the ſenſe of the Pædo-baptiſts is ſo weak a manner of arguing, that *Auſtin*, whoſe device it was (and men uſe to be in love with their own fancies) at the moſt pretended it but as probable and a mere conjecture.

XIV. And as ill ſucceſs will they have with the other arguments as with this: For from the action of Chriſt's bleſſing infants to infer that they are to be baptized, proves nothing ſo much as that there is great want of better arguments; the concluſion would be with more probability derived thus: Chriſt bleſſed children and ſo diſmiſſed them, but baptized them not; therefore infants are not to be baptized: but let this be as weak as its enemy, yet that Chriſt did not baptize them, is an argument ſufficient, that Chriſt hath other ways of bringing them to heaven than by baptiſm; he paſſed his act of grace upon them by benediction and impoſition of hands.

XV. And therefore, although neither infants nor any man in *puris naturalibus* can attain to a ſupernatural end, without the addition of ſome inſtrument or means of God's appointing, ordinarily and regularly; yet where God hath not appointed a rule nor an order, as in the caſe of infants

fants we contend he hath not, the argument is invalid. And as we are ſure that God hath not commanded infants to be baptized; ſo we are ſure God will do them no injuſtice, nor damn them for what they cannot help.

XVI. And therefore, let them be preſſed with all the inconveniencies that are conſequent to original Sin, yet either it will not be laid to the charge of Infants, ſo as to be ſufficient to condemn them; or if it could, yet the mercy and abſolute goodneſs of God will ſecure them, if he take them away before they can glorify him with a free obedience; *Quid ergo feſtinat innocens ætas ad remiſſionem peccatorum*, was the queſtion of *Tertullian*, (*lib. de bapt.*) he knew no ſuch danger from their original guilt, as to drive them to a laver, of which in that age of innocence they had no need, as he conceived. And therefore, there is no neceſſity of flying to the help of others, for tongue and heart, and faith, and prediſpoſitions to baptiſm; for what need all this ſtir? as infants without their own conſent, without any act of their own, and without any exteriour ſolemnity contracted the guilt of *Adam*'s ſin, and ſo are lyable to all the puniſhment, which can with juſtice, deſcend upon his poſterity who are perſonally innocent; ſo Infants ſhall be reſtored without any ſolemnity or act of their own, or of any other men for them, by the ſecond *Adam*, by the redemption of Jeſus Chriſt, by his righteouſneſs and mercies applyed either immediately, or how or when he ſhall be pleaſed to appoint. And ſo *Auſtin*'s argument will come to nothing, without any need of god-fathers, or the faith of any body elſe. And it is too narrow a conception of God Almighty, becauſe he hath tied us to the obſervation of the ceremonies of his own inſtitution, that therefore he hath tyed himſelf to it. Many thouſand ways there are, by which God can bring any reaſonable ſoul to himſelf: But nothing is more unreaſonable,

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than becauſe he hath tyed all men of years and diſcretion to this way; therefore we of our own heads ſhall carry infants to him that way, without his direction: The conceit is poor and low, and the action conſequent to it is too bold and ventrous; *myſterium meum mihi & filiis domûs meæ*: Let him do what he pleaſe to infants, we muſt not.

XVII. Only this is certain, that God hath as great care of infants as of others, and becauſe they have no capacity of doing ſuch acts, as may be in order to acquiring ſalvation, God will by his own immediate mercy bring them thither where he hath intended them; but to ſay that therefore he will do it by an external act and miniſtry, and that confin'd to a particular, *viz.* This Rite and no other, is no good Argument, unleſs God could not do it without ſuch means, or that he had ſaid he wou'd not: And why cannot God as well do his mercies to infants now immediately, as he did before the inſtitution either of circumciſion or baptiſm?

XVIII. However, there is no danger that infants ſhould periſh for want of this external miniſtry, much leſs for prevaricating Chriſt's precept of *Niſi quis renatus fuerit, &c.* For firſt, the water and the ſpirit in this place ſignify the ſame thing; and by water is meant the effect of the ſpirit, cleanſing and purifying the ſoul, as appears in its parallel place of Chriſt baptizing with the ſpirit and with fire. For although this was literally fulfilled in Pentecoſt, yet morally there is more in it, for it is the ſign of the effect of the Holy Ghoſt; and his productions upon the ſoul; and it was an excellency of our bleſſed ſaviour's office, that he baptizes *all* that come to him with Holy Ghoſt and with fire; for ſo St. *John* preferring Chriſt's miſſion and office before his own, tells the Jews, not Chriſt's diſciples, that Chriſt ſhall baptize them with fire and

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the holy ſpirit, that is, *all that come to him*, as *John the Baptiſt* did with water; for ſo lies the Antitheſis: And you may as well conclude, that infants muſt alſopaſs through the fire as through the water. And that we may not think this a trick to elude the preſſure of this place, *Peter* ſays the ſame thing; for when he had ſaid that Baptiſm ſaves us, he adds by way of explication *(not the waſhing of the fleſh, but the confidence of a good conſcience towards God)* plainly ſaying that it is not water, or the purifying of the body, but the cleanſing of the ſpirit, which does that which is ſuppoſed to be the effect of baptiſm; and if our Saviour's excluſive negative be expounded by analogy to this of *Peter*, as certainly the other parallel inſtance muſt, and this may, then it will be ſo far from proving the neceſſity of infants baptiſm, that it can conclude for no man, that he is oblig'd to the rite; and the doctrine of the baptiſm is only to derive from the very words of inſtitution, and not be forced from words which were ſpoken before it was ordain'd. But to let paſs this advantage, and to ſuppoſe it meant of external baptiſm; yet this no more infers a neceſſity of infant's baptiſm, then the other words of Chriſt infer a neceſſity to give them the holy communion; *Niſi comederitis carnem filii hominis, & biberitis ſanguinem, non introibitis in regnum cælorum*; and yet we do not think theſe words ſufficient Argument to communicate them; if men therefore will do us juſtice, either let them give both ſacraments to infants, as ſome ages of the church did, or neither. For the wit of man is not able to ſhew a diſparity in the ſanction, or in the energy of its expreſſion. And therefore they were honeſt who underſtood the obligation to be parallel, and performed it accordingly; and yet becauſe we ſay they were deceived in one inſtance, and yet the obligation (all the world cannot reaſonably ſay otherwiſe) is the ſame;

ſame; they are as honeſt and do neither. And ſince the ancient church did with an equal opinion of neceſſity give them the communion, and yet men now adays do not, why ſhall men be more burthened with a prejudice and a name of obloquy, for not giving the infants one ſacrament, more than they are diſliked for not affording them the other? If *Anabaptiſt* ſhall be a name of diſgrace, why ſhall not ſome other name be invented for them that deny to communicate infants, which ſhall be equally diſgraceful, or elſe both the opinions ſignified by ſuch names, be accounted no diſparagement, but receive their eſtimate according to their truth?

XIX. Of which truth, ſince we are now taking account from pretences of Scripture, it is conſiderable that the diſcourſe of St. *Peter* which is pretended for the intitling infants to the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, and by conſequence to baptiſm, which is ſuppoſed to be its inſtrument and conveyance, is wholly a fancy, and hath in it nothing of certainty or demonſtration, and not much probability. For beſides that the thing itſelf is unreaſonable, and the Holy Ghoſt works by the heightening and improving our natural faculties; and therefore is a promiſe that ſo concerns them as they are reaſonable creatures, and may have a title to it, in proportion to their nature, but no poſſeſſion or reception of it, till their faculties come into act: beſides this, I ſay, the words mentioned in St. *Peter*'s ſermon (which are the only record of the promiſe) are interpreted upon a weak miſtake: The promiſe belongs to you and to your children, therefore infants are actually receptive of it in that capacity. That's the argument; but the reaſon of it is not yet diſcovered, nor ever will, for [*to you and to your children*] is uſed to you and your poſterity; to you and your children when they are of the ſame capacity, in which you are effectually receptive of the

promiſe: But he, that when ever the word [*children*] is uſed in ſcripture ſhall by [*children*] underſtand infants, muſt needs believe that in all *Iſrael* there were no men, but all were infants; and if that had been true, it had been the greater wonder they ſhould overcome the *Anakims* and beat the king of *Moab*, and march ſo far, and diſcourſe ſo well; for they were all called the children of *Iſrael*.

XX. And for the allegation of St. *Paul* that infants are holy, if their parents be faithful, it ſignifies nothing, but that they are holy by deſignation, juſt as *Jeremy* and *John Baptiſt* were ſanctified in their mother's womb, that is, they were appointed and deſigned for holy miniſtries; but had not received the promiſe of the Father, the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, for all that ſanctification; and juſt ſo the children of chriſtian Parents are ſanctified, that is deſigned to the ſervice of Jeſus Chriſt, and the future participation of the promiſes.

XXI. And as the promiſe appertains not (for aught appears) to infants in that capacity and conſiſtence, but only by the title of their being reaſonable creatures, and when they come to that act of which by nature they have the faculty; ſo if it did, yet baptiſm is not the means of conveying the Holy Ghoſt. For that which *Peter* ſays, *be baptized and ye ſhall receive the Holy Ghoſt*, ſignifies no more than this; Firſt be baptized and then by impoſition of the apoſtles' hands (which was another myſtery and rite,) ye ſhall receive the promiſe of the Father: And this is nothing but an inſinuation of the rite of confirmation, as it is to this ſenſe expounded by divers ancient authors, and in ordinary miniſtry, the effect of it is not beſtowed upon any unbaptized perſons; for it is an order next after baptiſm; and upon this ground *Peter*'s argument in the caſe of *Cornelius*, was concluding enough *á majori ad minus:* Thus the Holy Ghoſt was beſtowed upon him and

and his family, which gift by ordinary miniſtry, was conſequent to baptiſm, (not as the effect is to the cauſe or to the proper inſtrument, but as a conſequent is to an antecedent in a chain of cauſes, accidentally and by poſitive inſtitution depending upon each other) God by that miracle did give teſtimony, that the perſons of the men were in great diſpoſitions towards heaven, and therefore were to be admitted to thoſe rites, which are the ordinary inlets into the kingdom of heaven. But then from hence to argue that where ever there is a capacity of receiving the ſame grace, there alſo the ſame ſign is to be miniſtred, and from hence to infer Pædobaptiſm, is an argument very ſallacious upon ſeveral grounds. 1. Becauſe baptiſm is not the ſign of the Holy Ghoſt, but by another myſtery it was conveyed ordinarily, and extraordinarily; it was conveyed independently from any myſtery, and ſo the argument goes upon a wrong ſuppoſition. 2. If the ſuppoſition were true, the propoſition built upon it is falſe; for they that are capable of the ſame grace, are not always capable of the ſame ſign; for women under the law of *Moſes*, although they were capable of the righteouſneſs of faith, yet they were not capable of the ſign of circumciſion: For God does not always convey his graces in the ſame manner, but to ſome mediately, to others immediately; and there is no better inſtance in the world of it, than the gift of the Holy Ghoſt (which is the thing now inſtanced in this conteſtation) for it is certain in ſcripture, that it was ordinarily given by impoſition of hands, and that after baptiſm; (And when this came into an ordinary miniſtry, it was called by the ancient church chriſm, or confirmation) but yet it was given ſometimes without impoſition of hands, as at Pentecoſt and to the family of *Cornelius*; ſometimes before baptiſm, ſometimes after, ſometimes in conjunction with it.

XXII. And after all this, leſt theſe arguments ſhould not aſcertain their cauſe, they fall on complaining againſt God, and will not be content with God, unleſs they may baptize their children; but take exceptions that God did more for the children of the jews. But why ſo? Becauſe God made a covenant with their children actually as infants, and conſigned it by circumciſion: Well; ſo he did with our children too in their proportion. He made a covenant of ſpiritual promiſes on his part, and ſpiritual and real ſervices on ours; and this pertains to children when they are capable, but made with them as ſoon as they are alive, and yet not ſo as with the Jewiſh babes; for as their rite conſigned them actually, ſo it was a national and temporal bleſſing and covenant, as a ſeparation of them from the portion of the nations, a marking them for a peculiar people, (and therefore while they were in the wilderneſs and ſeparate from the commixture of all people, they were not at all circumciſed) but as that rite did ſeal the righteouſneſs of faith, ſo by virtue of its adherency, and remanency in their fleſh, it did that work when the children came to age. But in chriſtian infants the caſe is otherwiſe; for the new covenant being eſtabliſh'd upon better Promiſes, is not only to better purpoſes, but alſo in diſtinct manner to be underſtood; when their ſpirits are as receptive of a ſpiritual act or impreſs, as the bodies of jewiſh children were of the ſign of circumciſion, then it is to be conſigned: But this buſineſs is quickly at an end, by ſaying that God hath done no leſs for ours, than for their children; for he will do the mercies of a Father and Creator to them; and he did no more to the other; but he hath done more to ours; for he hath made a covenant with them, and built it upon promiſes of the greateſt concernment; he did not ſo them: But then for the other part which is the main of the argument,

argument, that unleſs this mercy be conſigned by baptiſm, as good not at all in reſpect of us, becauſe we want the comfort of it; this is the greateſt vanity in the world: For when God hath made a promiſe pertaining alſo to our children (for ſo our adverſaries contend, and we alſo acknowledge in its true ſenſe) ſhall not this promiſe, this word of God be of ſufficient truth, certainty, and efficacy to cauſe comfort, unleſs we tempt God and require a ſign of him? May not Chriſt ſay to theſe men as ſometime to the jews, *a wicked and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, but no ſign ſhall be given unto it?* But the truth on't is, this argument is nothing but a direct quarrelling with God Almighty.

XXIII. Now ſince there is no ſtrength in the doctrinal part, the practice and precedents apoſtolical and eccleſiaſtical, will be of leſs concernment, if they were true as is pretended, becauſe actions apoſtololical are not always rules for ever; it might be fit for Them to do it *pro loco & tempore* as divers others of their inſtitutions, but yet no engagement paſt thence upon following ages; for it might be convenient at that time, in the new ſpring of chriſtianity, and till they had engaged a conſiderable party, by that means to make them parties againſt the gentile ſuperſtition, and by way of pre-occupation to aſcertain them to their own ſect when they came to be men; or for ſome other reaſon not tranſmitted to us, becauſe the queſtion of fact itſelf is not ſufficiently determincd. For the inſinuation of that precept of baptizing *all nations*, of which children certainly are a part, does as little advantage as any of the reſt, becauſe other parallel expreſſions of ſcripture determine and expound themſelves to a ſenſe that includes not all perſons abſolutely, but of a capable condition; as *adorate eum omnes gentes, & pſallite Deo omnes nationes terræ*, and divers more.

XXIV. As for the conjecture concerning the family of *Stephanus*, at the beſt it is but a conjecture, and beſides that, it is not proved that there were children in the family; yet if that were granted, it follows not that they were baptized, becauſe by [*whole families*] in ſcripture is meant all perſons of reaſon and age within the family; for it is ſaid, of the ruler at * *Capernaum, that he believed and all his houſe:* now you may alſo ſuppoſe that in his houſe were little babes, that is likely enough, and you may ſuppoſe that they did believe too before they could underſtand, but that's not ſo likely; and then the argument from baptizing of *Stephen*'s houſhold may be allowed juſt as probable: but this is unman-like to build upon ſuch ſlight aëry conjectures.

XXV. But Tradition by all means muſt ſupply the place of Scripture, and there is pretended a tradition apoſtolical, that infants were baptized: but at this we are not much moved: for we who rely upon the writen word of God as ſufficient to eſtabliſh all true religion, do not value the allegation of traditions: and however the world goes, none of the reformed churches can pretend this argument againſt this opinion, becauſe they who reject tradition when 'tis againſt them, muſt not pretend it at all for them: but if we ſhould allow the topick to be good, yet how will it be verified? For ſo far as it can yet appear, it relies wholly upon the teſtimony of *Origen*; for from him *Auſtin* had it. Now a tradition apoſtolical, if it be not conſigned with a fuller teſtimony than of one perſon whom all after-ages have condemned of many errors, will obtain ſo little reputation amongſt thoſe, who know that things have upon greater authority pretended to derive from the

* John 4.

apoſtles,

apoſtles, and yet falſly, that it will be a great argument that he is credulous and weak, who ſhall be determined by ſo weak probation in matters of ſo great concernment. And the truth of the buſineſs is, as there was no command of ſcripture to oblige children to the ſuſception of it, ſo the neceſſity of Pædo-baptiſm was not determined in the church till in the eighth age after Chriſt, but in the year 418 in the *Milevitan* council, a provincial of *Africa*, there was a canon made for Pædo-baptiſm; never till then! I grant it was practiſed in *Africa* before that time, and they or ſome of them thought well of it, and though that be no argument for us to think ſo, yet none of them did ever, before, pretend it to be neceſſary, none to have been a precept of the goſpel. St. *Auſtin* was the firſt that ever preached it to be abſolutely neceſſary; and it was in his heat and anger againſt *Pelagius*, who had warmed and chaſed him ſo in that queſtion, that it made him innovate in other doctrines poſſibly of more concernment than this. And that although this was practiſed anciently in *Africa*, yet that it was without an opinion of neceſſity, and not often there, nor at all in other places, we have the teſtimony of a learned Pædo-baptiſt, *Ludovicus Vives*, who in his annotations upon St. *Auſtin*, *De Civit. Dei. l.* 1. *c.* 27. affirms, *Neminem niſi adultum antiquitùs ſolere baptizari.*

XXVI. But beſides that the tradition cannot be proved to be apoſtolical; we have very good evidence from antiquity, that it was the opinion of the primitive church, that infants ought not to be baptized; and this is clear in the ſixth canon of the council of *Neocæſarea*, The words are theſe, περι κυοφορυσης ὁτι δει φωτιζεσθαι ὁποτε βυλεται· υδεν γαρ κοινωνει ἡ τικτυσα τω τικτομενω. δια το ἑκαστυ ιδιαν την προαιρεσιν την εν τη ὁμολογια δεικνυσθαι: The ſenſe is this, A wo-

man with child may be baptized when ſhe pleaſe; for her baptiſm concerns not the child. The reaſon of the connexion of the parts of that canon is in the following words; becauſe every one in that confeſſion is to give a demonſtration of his own choice and election: meaning plainly, that if the baptiſm of the mother did alſo paſs upon the child, it were not fit for a pregnant woman to receive baptiſm, becauſe in that ſacrament there being a confeſſion of faith, which confeſſion ſuppoſes underſtanding, and free choice, it is not reaſonable the child ſhould be conſigned with ſuch a myſtery, ſince it cannot do any act of choice or underſtanding: the canon ſpeaks reaſon, and it intimates a practice which was abſolutely univerſal in the church, of interrogating the Catechumens concerning the articles of creed: which is one argument that either they did not admit infants to baptiſm, or that they did prevaricate egregiouſly in aſking queſtions of them, who themſelves knew were not capable of giving anſwer.

XXVII. * And to ſupply their incapacity by the anſwer of a godfather, is but the ſame unreaſonableneſs acted with a worſe circumſtance: and there is no ſenſible account can be given of it; for that which ſome imperfectly murmur concerning ſtipulations civil performed by tutors in the name of their pupils, is an abſolute vanity: for what if by poſitive conſtitution of the Romans ſuch ſolemnities of law are required in all ſtipulations, and by indulgence are permitted in the caſe of a notable benefit accruing to Minors, muſt God be tied, and chriſtian religion tranſact her myſteries by proportion and compliance with

* Quidni neceſſe eſt (ſic legit Franc. Junius in notis ad Tertul.) ſponſores etiam periculo ingeri qui & ipſi per mortalitatem deſtituere promiſſiones ſuas poſſint, & proventu malæ indolis falli? *Tertul. lib. de baptiſ. cap.* 18.

the

the law of the Romans? I know God might if he would have appointed Godfathers to give anſwer in behalf of the children, and to be fidejuſſors for them; but we cannot find any authority or ground that he hath, and if he had, then it is to be ſuppoſed he would have given them commiſſion to have tranſacted the ſolemnity with better circumſtances, and given anſwers with more truth. For the queſtion is aſked of believing in the preſent. And if the godfathers anſwer in the name of the child, * [*I do believe*] it is notorious they ſpeak falſe and ridiculouſly; for the infant is not capable of believing, and if he were, he were alſo capable of diſſenting, and how then do they know his mind? And therefore *Tertullian* gives advice that the baptiſm of infants ſhould be deferred, till they could give an account of their faith; and the ſame alſo is the counſel of † *Gregory* Biſhop of *Nazianzum*, although he allow them to haſten it in caſe of neceſſity; for though his reaſon taught him what was fit, yet he was overborn with the practice and opinion of his age, which began to bear too violently upon him; and yet in another place he makes mention of ſome to whom baptiſm was not adminiſtred δια νηπιοτητα, by reaſon of infancy; to which if we add that the parents of St. *Auſtin*, St. *Hierom*, and St. *Ambroſe* although they were chriſtian, yet did not baptiſe their children before they were 30 years of age, it will be very conſiderable in the example, and of great efficacy for deſtroying the ſuppoſed neceſſity or derivation from the apoſtles.

* Lib. de baptiſ. prope finem, cap. 18. itaque pro perſonæ cujuſque conditione ac diſpoſitione, etiam ætate, cunctatio baptiſmi utilior eſt, præcipuè tamen circa parvulos....Fiant Chriſtiani cum Chriſtum noſſe potuerint. † Orat. 40. quæſt in S. Baptiſma.

XXVIII.

XXVIII. But however, it is againſt the perpetual analogy of Chriſt's doctrine to baptize infants: for beſides that Chriſt never gave any precept to baptize them, nor ever himſelf nor his apoſtles (that appears) did baptize any of them; all that either he or his apoſtles ſaid concerning it, requires ſuch previous diſpoſitions to baptiſm of which infants are not capable, and theſe are faith and repentance: and not to inſtance in thoſe innumerable places that require faith before this ſacrament, there needs no more but this one ſaying of our bleſſed Saviour, * *He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved, but he that believeth not ſhall be damned*; plainly thus, faith and baptiſm in conjunction will bring a man to heaven; but if he have not faith, baptiſm ſhall do him no good. So that if baptiſm be neceſſary then, ſo is faith, and much more; for want of faith damns abſolutely; it is not ſaid ſo of the want of baptiſm. Now if this decretory ſentence be to be underſtood of perſons of age, and if children by ſuch an anſwer (which indeed is reaſonable enough) be excuſed from the neceſſity of faith, the want of which regularly damns; then it is ſottiſh to ſay, the ſame incapacity of reaſon and faith ſhall not excuſe from the actual ſuſception of baptiſm, which is leſs neceſſary, and to which faith and many other acts are neceſſary prediſpoſitions when it is reaſonably and humanely received.

The concluſion is, that baptiſm is alſo to be deferred till the time of faith: and whether infants have faith or no, is a queſtion to be diſputed by perſons, that care not how much they ſay, nor how little they prove.

XXIX. 1. Perſonal and actual faith they have none; for they have no acts of underſtanding;

* Mar. 16.

and

and beſides how can any man know that they have, ſince he never ſaw any ſign of it, neither was he told ſo by any one that could tell? 2. Some ſay they have imputative faith; but then ſo let the ſacrament be too; that is, if they have the parents faith or the church's, then ſo let baptiſm be imputed alſo by derivation from them, that as in their mothers' womb, and while they hang on their breaſts, they live upon their mother's nouriſhment, ſo they may upon the baptiſm of their parents or their mother the church. For ſince faith is neceſſary to the ſuſception of baptiſm (and they themſelves confeſs it by ſtriving to find out new kinds of faith to daub the matter up) ſuch as the faith is, ſuch muſt be the ſacrament: for there is no proportion between an actual ſacrament and an imputative faith; this being in immediate and neceſſary order to that: and whatſoever can be ſaid to take off from the neceſſity of actual faith, all that and much more may be ſaid to excuſe from the actual ſuſception of baptiſm. 3. The firſt of theſe devices was that of *Luther* and his ſcholars, the ſecond of *Calvin* and his; and yet there is a third device which the church of *Rome* teaches, and that is, that infants have habitual faith: but who told them ſo? How can they prove it? What revelation, or reaſon teaches any ſuch thing? Are they by this habit ſo much as diſpoſed to an actual belief without a new maſter? Can an infant ſent into a *Mahometan* province be more confident for chriſtianity when he comes to be a man, than if he had not been baptized? Are there any acts precedent, concomitant or conſequent to this pretended habit? This ſtrange invention is abſolutely without art, without ſcripture, reaſon, or authority: but the men are to be excuſed unleſs there were a better; but for all theſe ſtratagems, the argument now alledged againſt

againſt the baptiſm of infants is demonſtrative and unanſwerable.

XXX. To which alſo this conſideration may be added, that if baptiſm be neceſſary to the ſalvation of infants, upon whom is the impoſition laid? To whom is the command given? To the parents or to the children? Not to the children, for they are not capable of a law; not to the parents, for then God hath put the ſalvation of innocent babes into the power of others; and infants may be damned for their fathers careleſsneſs or malice. It follows that it is not neceſſary at all to be done to them, to whom it cannot be preſcribed as a law, and in whoſe behalf it cannot be reoſonably intruſted to others with the appendant neceſſity; and if it be not neceſſary, it is certain it is not reaſonable, and moſt certain it is no where in terms preſcribed, and therefore it is to be preſumed, that it ought to be underſtood and adminiſtred according as other precepts are, with reference to the capacity of the ſubject, and the reaſonableneſs of the thing.

XXXI. For I conſider, that the baptizing of infants does ruſh us upon ſuch inconveniences which in other queſtions we avoid like rocks, which will appear if we diſcourſe thus.

Either baptiſm produces ſpiritual effects, or it produces them not: if it produces not any, why is ſuch contention about it, what are we the nearer heaven if we are baptized? And if it be neglected, what are we the farther off? But if (as without all peradventure all the *Pædo-papiſts* will ſay) baptiſm does a work upon the ſoul, producing ſpiritual benefits and advantages, theſe advantages are produced by the external work of the ſacrament alone; or by that as it is helped by the co-operation and prediſpoſitions of the *ſuſcipient.*

If

If by the external work of the ſacrament alone, how does this differ from the *opus operatum* of the papiſts, ſave that it is worſe? For they ſay the ſacrament does not produce its effect but in a *ſuſcipient* diſpoſed by all requiſites and due preparatives of piety, faith, and repentance; though in a ſubject ſo diſpoſed, they ſay the ſacrament by its own virtue does it; but this opinion ſays it does it of itſelf, without the help, or ſo much as the co-exiſtence of any condition, but the mere reception.

But if the ſacrament does not do its work alone, but *per modum recipientis*, according to the prediſpoſitions of the ſuſcipient; then, becauſe infants can neither hinder it, nor do any thing to further it, it does them no benefit at all. And if any man run for ſuccour to that exploded χρησφυγέλον, that infants have faith, or any other inſpired habit of I know not what or how; we deſire no more advantage in the world, than that they are conſtrained to an anſwer without revelation, againſt reaſon, common ſenſe, and all the experience in the world.

The ſum of the argument in ſhort, is this, though under another repreſentment.

Either baptiſm is a mere *ceremony*, or it implies a *duty* on our part. If it be a ceremony only, how does it ſanctify us, or *make the comers thereunto perfect?* If it imply a *duty* on our part, how then can children receive it, who cannot do duty at all?

And indeed, this way of miniſtration makes baptiſm to be wholly an outward duty, a work of the law, a carnal ordinance; it makes us adhere to the letter, without regard of the ſpirit, to be ſatisfied with ſhadows, to return to bondage, to relinquish the myſteriouſneſs, the ſubſtance and ſpiritualty of the goſpel. Which argument is of ſo much the more conſideration, becauſe under the

the ſpiritual covenant, or the goſpel of grace, if *the myſtery* go not before the *ſymbol* (which it does when the ſymbols are ſeals and conſignations of the grace, as it is ſaid the ſacraments are) yet it always accompanies it, but never follows in order of time: and this is clear in the perpetual analogy of holy ſcripture.

For baptiſm is never propounded, mentioned or enjoined, as a means of remiſſion of ſins, or of eternal life, but ſomething of duty, choice and ſanctity is joined with it, in order to the production of the end ſo mentioned, * *Know ye not, that as many as are baptized into Chriſt Jeſus, are baptized into his death?* There is the myſtery and the ſymbol together, and declared to be perpetually united, ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν. All of us who were baptized into one, were baptized into the other. Not only into the name of Chriſt, but into his death alſo: but the meaning of this, as it is explained in the following words of St. *Paul*, makes much for our purpoſe: for to be baptized into his death, ſignifies † *to be buried with him in baptiſm; that as Chriſt roſe from the dead, we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life:* that's the full myſtery of baptiſm; for being baptized into his death, or which is all one in the next words, ἐν ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ‡ *into the likeneſs of his death*, cannot go alone; *if we be ſo planted into Chriſt, we ſhall be partakers of his reſurrection*; and that is not here inſtanced in preciſe *reward*; but in *exact duty*, for all this is nothing but § *crucifixion of the old man, a deſtroying the body of ſin, that we no longer ſerve ſin.*

This indeed is truly to be baptized both in the *ſymbol* and the *myſtery:* whatſoever is leſs than this, is but the *ſymbol* only, a *mere ceremony*, an *opus*

* Rom. 6. 3. † Verſ. 4. ‡ Verſ. 5. § Verſ. 6.

operatum,

operatum, a dead letter, an empty ſhadow, an inſtrument without an agent to manage, or force to actuate it.

Plainer yet: *Whoſoever are baptized into Chriſt have put on Chriſt, have put on the new man:* but to put on this new man, is *to be formed in righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and truth:* this whole argument is the very words of St. *Paul.* The major propoſition is dogmatically determined. *Gal.* 3. 27. The minor in *Epheſ.* 4. 24. The concluſion then is obvious, that they who are not formed new *in righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and truth*, they who remaining in the preſent incapacities cannot *walk in newneſs of life*; they have not been *baptized into Chriſt*, and then they have but one member of the diſtinction, uſed by St. *Peter*, they have that baptiſm *which is a putting away the filth of the fleſh*; but they have not that baptiſm * *which is the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God*, which is the only *baptiſm that ſaves us:* and this is the caſe of children; and then the caſe is thus.

As infants by the force of nature cannot put themſelves into a ſupernatural condition, (and therefore ſay the *Pædo-papiſts*, they need baptiſm to put them into it:) ſo if they be baptized before the uſe of reaſon, before the *works of the ſpirit*, before the operations of grace, before they can throw off *the works of darkneſs, and live in righteouſneſs and newneſs of life*, they are never the nearer: from the pains of hell they ſhall be ſaved by the mercies of God and their own innocence, though they die *in puris naturalibus*, and baptiſm will carry them no further. For that *baptiſm that ſaves us*, is not only the *waſhing with water*, of which only, children are capable, *but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God*, of which they are not capable

* 1. Pet. 3. 21.

till

till the uſe of reaſon, till they know to chuſe the good and refuſe the evil.

And from thence I conſider anew, That all vows made by perſons under others' names, ſtipulations made by *minors*, are not valid, till they by a ſupervening act after they are of ſufficient age do ratify them. Why then may not infants as well make the vow *de novo*, as *de novo* ratify that which was made for them *ab antiquo*, when they come to years of choice? If the * *infant* vow be invalid till the *manly* confirmation, why were it not as good they ſtaid to make it till that time, before which if they do make it, it is to no purpoſe? This would be conſidered.

XXXII. And in concluſion, Our way is the ſurer way, for not to baptize children till they can give an account of their faith, is the moſt proportionable to an act of reaſon and humanity, and it can have no danger in it: for to ſay that infants may be damned for want of baptiſm, (a thing which is not in their power to acquire, they being perſons not yet capable of a law) is to affirm that of God which we dare not ſay of any wiſe and good man. Certainly it is much derogatory to God's juſtice and a plain defiance to the infinite reputation of his goodneſs.

XXXIII. And therefore, whoever will pertinacioufly perſiſt in this opinion of the Pædo-papiſts and practiſe it accordingly, they pollute the blood of the everlaſting teſtament, they diſhonour and make a pageantry of the ſacrament, they ineffectually repreſent a ſepulchre into the death of Chriſt, and pleaſe themſelves in a ſign without effect, making baptiſm like the fig-tree in the goſpel, full of leaves but no fruit; and they invocate the holy ghoſt in vain, doing as if one

* Vide Eraſmum in præfat. ad Annotat. in Matth.

ſhould

ſhould call upon him to illuminate a ſtone, or a tree.

XXXIV. Thus far the *Anabaptiſts* may argue; and men have diſputed againſt them with ſo much weakneſs and confidence, that they have been encouraged in their error * more by the accidental advantages we have given them by our weak arguings, then by any truth of their cauſe, or excellency of their wit. But the uſe I make of it, as to our preſent queſtion, is this: That ſince there is no direct impiety in the opinion, nor any that is apparently conſequent to it, and they with ſo much probability do or may pretend to true perſuaſion, they are with all means, chriſtian, fair, and humane, to be argued with, or inſtructed; but, if they cannot be perſuaded, they muſt be left to God, who knows every degree of every man's underſtanding, all his weakneſſes and ſtrengths, what impreſs each argument makes upon his ſpirit, and how unreſiſtible every reaſon is, and he alone judges his innocency and ſincerity; and for the queſtion, I think there is ſo much to be pretended againſt that, which I believe to be the truth, that there is much more truth than evidence on our ſide, and therefore we may be confident as for our own particulars, but not too forward peremptorily to preſcribe to others, much leſs damn, or to kill, or to perſecute them that only in this particular diſagree.

* οὐκ ἐν τοις ἑαυτων δογμασι την ισχυν ἐχουσις, αλλ' ἐν τοις ἡμετερων σαθροις ταυτην θηρευουσις, as *Nazianzen* obſerves of the caſe of the church in his time.

SECT. XIX.

That there may be no toleration of doctrines inconſiſtent with piety or the public good.

I. BUT then for their other capital opinion with all its branches, that it is not lawful for princes to put malefactors to death, nor to take up defenſive arms, nor to miniſter an oath, nor to contend in judgment, it is not to be diſputed with ſuch liberty as the former: for although it be part of that doctrine which * *Clemens Alexandrinus* ſays was delivered *per ſecretam traditionem Apoſtolorum, Non licere Chriſtianis contendere in judicio, nec coram gentibus, nec coram ſanctis, & perfectum non debere jurare*; and the other part ſeems to be warranted by the eleventh canon of the *Nicene* council, which enjoins penance to them that take arms after their converſion to chriſtianity; yet either theſe authorities are to be ſlighted, or be made receptive of any interpretation rather than the common wealth be diſarmed of its neceſſary ſupports, and all laws made ineffectual and impertinent: for the intereſt of the republick, and the well-being of bodies politick is not to depend upon the nicety of our imaginations, or the fancies of any peeviſh or miſtaken prieſts; and there is no reaſon a prince ſhould aſk *John-a-Brunk*, whether his underſtanding will give him leave to reign, and be a king; nay, ſuppoſe there were divers places of ſcripture, which did ſeemingly reſtrain the political uſe of the ſword; yet ſince the avoiding a perſonal inconvenience, hath by all men been accounted ſufficient reaſon to expound ſcripture

* Lib. 7. Stromat.

to

to any ſenſe rather than the literal, which infers an unreaſonable inconvenience, (and therefore the *pulling out an eye, and the cutting off an hand*, is expounded by mortifying a vice, and killing a criminal habit) much rather muſt the allegations againſt the power of the ſword endure any ſenſe, rather than it ſhould be thought that chriſtianity ſhould deſtroy that which is the only inſtrument of juſtice, the reſtraint of vice, and ſupport of bodies politick. It is certain that Chriſt and his apoſtles, and chriſtian religion did comply with the moſt abſolute government, and the moſt imperial that was then in the world; and it could not have been at all indured in the world, if it had not; for indeed the world itſelf could not laſt in regular and orderly communities of men, but be a perpetual confuſion; if princes and the ſupreme power in bodies politick, were not armed with a coercive power to puniſh malefactors: the publick neceſſity, and univerſal experience of all the world, convinces thoſe men of being moſt unreaſonable, who make ſuch pretences which deſtroy all laws, and all communities, and the bands of civil ſocieties, and leave it arbitrary to every vain or vicious perſon, whether men ſhall be ſafe, or laws be eſtabliſhed, or a murderer hanged, or princes rule. So that in this caſe men are not ſo much to diſpute with particular arguments, as to conſider the intereſt and concernment of kingdoms and publick ſocieties: for the religion of Jeſus Chriſt is the beſt eſtabliſher of the felicity of private perſons, and of publick communities; it is a religion that is prudent and innocent, humane, and reaſonable, and brought infinite advantages to mankind, but no inconvenience, nothing that is unnatural, or unſociable, or unjuſt. And if it be certain that this world cannot be governed without laws, and laws without

out a Compulſory ſignify nothing; then it is certain, that it is no good religion that teaches doctrine whoſe conſequents will deſtroy all government; and therefore it is as much to be rooted out, as any thing that is the greateſt peſt and nuiſance to the publick intereſt: and that we may gueſs at the purpoſes of the men, and the inconvenience of ſuch doctrine; theſe men who did firſt intend by their doctrine to diſarm all princes, and bodies politick, did themſelves take up arms to eſtabliſh their wild, and impious fancy; and indeed, that prince or common wealth that ſhould be perſuaded by them, would be expoſed to all the inſolencies of foreigners, and all mutinies of the teachers themſelves; and the governors of the people could not do that duty they owe to their people, of protecting them from the rapine and malice which will be in the world as long as the world is. And therefore, *here* they are to be reſtrained from preaching ſuch doctrine, if they mean to preſerve their government, and the neceſſity of the thing will juſtify the lawfulneſs of the thing: if they think it to themſelves, that cannot be helped; ſo long it is innocent, as much as concerns the publick; but if they preach it, they may be accounted authors of all the conſequent inconveniences, and puniſhed accordingly: *No doctrine that deſtroys government is to be endured*; for although thoſe doctrines are not always good that ſerve the private ends of princes, or the ſecret deſigns of ſtate, which by reaſon of ſome accidents or imperfections of men may be promoted by that which is falſe and pretending; yet no doctrine can be good that does not comply with the formality of government itſelf, and the well being of bodies politick; * *Augur cum eſſet Cato, dicere*

* Cicero de ſenectute.

auſus

auſus eſt, optimis auſpiciis ea geri quæ pro reipub: ſalute gerentur; quæ contra rempub. fierent, contra auſpicia fieri: Religion is to meliorate the condition of a people, not to do it diſadvantage; and therefore thoſe doctrines that inconvenience the publick, are no parts of good religion; *ut Reſpub. ſalva ſit*, is a neceſſary conſideration in the permiſſion of propheſyings; for according to the true, ſolid, and prudent ends of the republick, ſo is the doctrine to be permitted or reſtrained; and the men that preach it, according as they are good ſubjects, and right common wealths men: for religion is a thing ſuperinduced to temporal government; and the church is an addition of a capacity to a common wealth; and therefore is in no ſenſe to diſſerve the neceſſity and juſt intereſts of that, to which it is ſuper-added for its advantage and conſervation.

II. And thus by a proportion to the rules of theſe inſtances, all their other doctrines are to have their judgment, as concerning toleration or reſtraint; for all are either ſpeculative, or practical, they are conſiſtent with the publick ends or inconſiſtent, they teach impiety or they are innocent, and they are to be permitted or rejected accordingly. For in the queſtion of toleration, the foundation of faith, good life and government is to be ſecured; in all other caſes, the former conſiderations are effectual.

SECT. XX.

How far the religion of the church of Rome *is tolerable.*

I. BUT now concerning the religion of the church of *Rome* (which was the other inſtance I promiſed to conſider) we will proceed another way, and not conſider the truth or falſity of the doctrines; for that is not the beſt way to determine the queſtion concerning permitting their religion or aſſemblies: becauſe that a thing is not true, is not argument ſufficient to conclude that he who believes it true is not to be endured; but we are to conſider what inducements there are which poſſeſs the underſtanding of thoſe men; whether they be reaſonable and innocent, ſufficient to abuſe or perſuade wiſe and good men, or whether the doctrines be commenced upon deſign, and managed with impiety, and then have effects not to be endured.

II. And here firſt, I conſider that thoſe doctrines which have had long continuance and poſſeſſion in the church, cannot eaſily be ſuppoſed in the preſent profeſſors to be a deſign, ſince they have received it from ſo many ages; and it is not likely that all ages ſhould have the ſame purpoſes, or that the ſame doctrine ſhould ſerve the ſeveral ends of divers ages. But however, long preſcription is a prejudice, oftentimes ſo inſupportable, that it cannot with many arguments be retrenched, as relying upon theſe grounds, that truth is more ancient than falſhood, that God would not for ſo many ages forſake his church, and leave her in an error; that whatſoever is new, is not only ſuſpicious, but falſe; which are ſuppoſitions,

poſitions, pious and plauſible enough. And if the church of *Rome* had communicated infants ſo long as ſhe hath prayed to ſaints, or baptized infants, the communicating would have been believed with as much confidence, as the other articles are, and the diſſentients with as much impatience rejected. But this conſideration is to be enlarged upon all thoſe particulars, which as they are apt to abuſe the perſons of the men, and amuſe their underſtandings, ſo they are inſtruments of their excuſe; and by making their errors to be invincible, and their opinions, though falſe, yet not criminal, make it alſo to be an effect of reaſon and charity, to permit the men a liberty of their conſcience, and let them anſwer to God for themſelves and their own opinions: ſuch as are the beauty and ſplendor of their church; their pompous ſervice; the ſtatelineſs and ſolemnity of the Hierarchy; their name of Catholick, which they ſuppoſe their own due, and to concern no other ſect of chriſtians; the antiquity of many of their doctrines; the continual ſucceſſion of their biſhops; their immediate derivation from the apoſtles; their title to ſucceed St. *Peter*; the ſuppoſal and pretence of his perſonal prerogatives; the advantages which the conjunction of the imperial ſeat with their epiſcopal had brought to that See; the flattering expreſſions of minor biſhops, which by being old records, have obtained credibility; the multitude and variety of people who are of their perſuaſion; apparent conſent with antiquity in many ceremonials which other churches have rejected; and a pretended, and ſometimes an apparent conſent with ſome elder ages in many matters doctrinal; the advantage which is derived to them by entertaining ſome perſonal opinions of the fathers, which they

with infinite clamours ſee to be cried up to be a doctrine of the church of that time; the great conſent of one part with another in that which moſt of them affirm to be *de fide*; the great differences which are commenced amongſt their adverſaries, abuſing the Liberty of Prophefying unto a very great licentiouſneſs; their happineſs of being inſtruments in converting divers nations; the advantages of monarchical government, the benefit of which as well as the inconveniences (which though they feel they conſider not) they daily enjoy; the piety and the auſterity of their religious orders of men and women; the ſingle life of their prieſts and biſhops; the riches of their church; the ſeverity of their faſts and their exterior obſervances; the great reputation of their firſt biſhops for faith and ſanctity; the known holineſs of ſome of thoſe perſons whoſe inſtitutes the religious perſons pretend to imitate; their miracles falſe or true, ſubſtantial or imaginary; the caſualties and accidents that have happened to their adverſaries, which being chances of humanity are attributed to ſeveral cauſes, according as the fancies of men and their intereſts are pleaſed or ſatisfied; the temporal felicity of their profeſſors; the oblique arts and indirect proceedings of ſome of thoſe who departed from them; and amongſt many other things, *the names of heretick and ſchiſmatick*, which they with infinite pertinacy faſten upon all that diſagree from them.

Theſe things and divers others may very eaſily perſuade perſons of much reaſon and more piety, to retain that which they know to have been the religion of their fore-fathers, which had actual poſſeſſion and ſeizure of mens underſtandings, before the oppoſite poſſeſſions had a name; and ſo much the rather, becauſe religion hath more

advantages

advantages upon the fancy and affections, than it hath upon philoſophy and ſevere diſcourſes, and therefore is the more eaſily perſuaded upon ſuch grounds as theſe, which are more apt to amuſe than to ſatisfy the underſtanding.

III. Secondly, If we conſider the doctrines themſelves, we ſhall find them to be ſuperſtructures ill built, and worſe managed, but yet they keep the foundation, they build upon God in Jeſus Chriſt, they profeſs the apoſtles creed, they retain faith and repentance as the ſupporters of all our hopes of heaven, and believe many more truths than can be proved to be of ſimple and original neceſſity to ſalvation: and therefore all the wiſeſt perſonages of the adverſe party allowed to them poſſibility of ſalvation, whilſt their errors are not faults of their will, but weakneſſes and deceptions of the underſtanding. So that there is nothing in the *foundation of faith*, that can reaſonably hinder them to be permitted: the foundation of faith ſtands ſecure enough for all their vain and unhandſome ſuperſtructures.

But then on the other ſide, if we take account of their doctrines as they relate to good life, or are conſiſtent or inconſiſtent with civil government, we ſhall have other conſiderations.

IV. For, Thirdly, I conſider, that many of their doctrines do accidentally teach or lead to ill life, and it will appear to any man that conſiders the reſult of theſe propoſitions: attrition (which is a low and imperfect degree of ſorrow for ſin, or as others ſay a ſorrow for ſin commenced upon any reaſon of temporal hope, or fear or deſire or any thing elſe) is a ſufficient diſpoſition for a man in the ſacrament of penance to receive abſolution, and be juſtified before God, by taking away the guilt of all his ſins, and the obligation to eternal pains.

pains. So that already the fear of hell is quite removed, upon conditions ſo eaſy, that many men take more pains to get a groat, than by this doctrine we are obliged to, for the curing and acquitting all the greateſt ſins of a whole life, of the moſt vicious perſon in the world: and but that they affright their people with a fear of purgatory, or with the ſeverity of penances in caſe they will not venture for purgatory (for by their doctrine they may chuſe or refuſe either) there would be nothing in their doctrine or diſcipline to impede and ſlacken their proclivity to ſin; but then they have as eaſy a cure for that too, with a little more charge ſometimes, but moſt commonly with leſs trouble: for there are ſo many confraternities, ſo many priviledged churches, altars, monaſteries, cœmeteries, offices, feſtivals, and ſo free a conceſſion of indulgences appendant to all theſe, and a thouſand fine devices to take away the fear of purgatory, to commute or expiate penances, that in no ſect of men, do they with more eaſe and cheapneſs reconcile a wicked life with the hopes of heaven, than in the Roman communion.

V. And indeed, if men would conſider things upon their true grounds, the church of *Rome* ſhould be more reproved upon doctrines that infer ill life, than upon ſuch as are contrary to faith. For falſe ſuperſtructures do not always deſtroy faith; but many of the doctrines they teach, if they were proſecuted to the utmoſt iſſue, would deſtroy good life: and therefore my quarrel with the church of *Rome* is greater and ſtronger upon ſuch points which are not uſually conſidered, than it is upon the ordinary diſputes, which have to no very great purpoſe ſo much diſturbed Chriſtendom: and I am more ſcandalized at her for teaching the ſufficiency of attrition in the ſacra-

ment,

ment, for indulging penances ſo frequently, for remitting all diſcipline, for making ſo great a part of religion to conſiſt in externals and ceremonials, for putting more force and energy and exacting with more ſeverity the commandments of men than the precepts of juſtice, and internal religion: laſtly, beſides many other things, for promiſing heaven to perſons after a wicked life, upon their impertinent cries and ceremonials tranſacted by the prieſt and the dying perſon: I confeſs I wiſh the zeal of Chriſtendom were a little more active againſt theſe and the like doctrines, and that men would write and live more earneſtly againſt them, than as yet they have done.

VI. But then, what influence this juſt zeal is to have upon the perſons of the profeſſors, is another conſideration: for as the Phariſees preached well and lived ill, and therefore were to be heard not imitated: ſo if theſe men live well though they teach ill, they are to be imitated, not heard: their doctrines by all means, chriſtian and humane, are to be diſcountenanced, but their perſons tolerated *eatenùs*; their profeſſion and decrees to be rejected and condemned, but the perſons to be permitted; becauſe by their good lives they confute their doctrines, that is, they give evidence, that they think no evil to be conſequent to ſuch opinions; and if they did, that they live good lives, is argument ſufficient that they would themſelves caſt the firſt ſtone againſt their own opinions, if they thought them guilty of ſuch miſdemeanors.

VII. But, Fourthly, if we conſider their doctrines in relation to government, and publick ſocieties of men; then if they prove faulty, they are ſo much the more intolerable, by how much the conſequents are of greater danger and malice: ſuch

ſuch doctrines as theſe, the pope may diſpenſe with all oaths taken to God or man; he may abſolve ſubjects from their allegiance to their natural prince: faith is not to be kept with hereticks; heretical princes may be ſlain by their ſubjects. Theſe propoſitions are ſo depreſt, and do ſo immediately communicate with matter, and the intereſts of men, that they are of the ſame conſideration with matters of fact, and are to be handled accordingly. To other doctrines ill life may be conſequent; but the connection of the antecedent and the conſequent is not (peradventure) perceived or acknowledged by him that believes the opinion with no greater confidence than he diſavows the effect, and iſſue of it. But in theſe, the ill effect is the direct profeſſion and purpoſe of the opinion, and therefore the man and the man's opinion is to be dealt with, juſt as the matter of fact is to be judged; for it is an immediate, a perceived, a direct event, and the very purpoſe of the opinion. Now theſe opinions are a direct overthrow to all humane ſociety, and mutual commerce, a deſtruction of government, and of the laws and duty and ſubordination which we owe to princes; and therefore thoſe men of the church of *Rome* who hold them, and preach them, cannot pretend to the excuſes of innocent opinions, and hearty perſuaſion, to the weakneſs of humanity, and the difficulty of things; for God hath not left thoſe truths which are neceſſary for conſervation of publick ſocieties of men, ſo intricate and obſcure, but that every one who is honeſt and deſirous to underſtand his duty, will certainly know that no chriſtian truth deſtroys a man's being ſociable and a member of the body politick, co-operating to the conſervation of the whole, as well as of itſelf. However, if it might happen

happen that men ſhould ſincerely err in ſuch plain matters of fact (for there are fools enow in the world) yet if he hold his peace, no man is to proſecute or puniſh him; for then it is mere opinion which comes not under political cogniſance, that is, that cogniſance which only can puniſh corporally; but if he preach it, he is actually a traytor, or ſeditious, or author of perjury, or a deſtroyer of humane ſociety, reſpectively to the nature of the doctrine; and the preaching ſuch doctrines cannot claim the privilege and immunity of a mere opinion, becauſe it is as much matter of fact, as any the actions of his diſciples and confidents, and therefore in ſuch caſes is not to be permitted, but judged according to the nature of the effect it hath, or may have, upon the actions of men.

VIII. Fifthly: But laſtly, in matters merely ſpeculative, the caſe is wholly altered, becauſe the body politick, which only may lawfully uſe the ſword, is not a competent judge of ſuch matters, which have not direct influence upon the body politick, or upon the lives and manners of men, as they are parts of a community (not but that princes or judges temporal may have as much ability as others, but by reaſon of the incompetency of the authority;) and *Gallio* ſpoke wiſely, when he diſcourſed thus to the Jews, * *If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdneſs, O ye Jews, reaſon would that I ſhould bear you; but if it be a queſtion of words, and names, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of ſuch matters*: the man ſpoke excellent reaſon; for the cogniſance of theſe things did appertain to men of the other robe: but the eccleſiaſtical power, which only is

* Act. 18. 14.

competent

competent to take notice of such questions, is not of capacity to use the temporal sword or corporal inflictions: the mere doctrines and opinions of men are things spiritual, and therefore not cognoscible by a temporal authority; and the ecclesiastical authority, which is to take cognisance, is itself so spiritual, that it cannot inflict any punishment corporal.

IX. And it is not enough to say, that when the magistrate restrains the preaching such opinions, if any man preach them he may be punished (and then it is not for his opinion but his disobedience that he is punished) for the temporal power ought not to restrain prophesyings, where the publick peace and interest is not certainly concerned. And therefore it is not sufficient to excuse him, whose law in that case, being by an incompetent power, made a scruple where there was no sin.

X. And under this consideration come very many articles of the church of *Rome*, which are wholly speculative, which do not derive upon practice, which begin in the understanding and rest there, and have no influence upon life and government, but very accidentally, and by a great many removes, and therefore are to be considered only so far as to guide men in their persuasions, but have no effect upon the persons of men, their bodies, or their temporal condition: I instance in two; prayer for the dead, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, these two to be instead of all the rest.

XI. For the first, This discourse is to suppose it false, and we are to direct our proceedings accordingly: and therefore I shall not need to urge with how many fair words and gay pretences, this doctrine is set off, apt either to couzen or instruct the

the conſcience of the wiſeſt, according as 'tis true or falſe reſpectively. But we find (ſays the Romaniſt) in the hiſtory of the *Maccabees*, that the Jews did pray and make offerings for the dead (which alſo appears by other teſtimonies, and by their form of prayers ſtill extant, which they uſed in the captivity) it is very conſiderable, that ſince our bleſſed Saviour did reprove all the evil doctrines and traditions of the Scribes and Phariſees, and did argue concerning the dead and the reſurrection againſt the Sadduces, yet he ſpake no word againſt this publick practice, but left it as he found it, which he who came to declare to us the will of his father would not have done, if it had not been innocent, pious and full of charity. To which by way of conſociation, if we add that St. *Paul* did pray for * *Oneſiphorus*, *That God would ſhew him a mercy in that day*, that is, according to the ſtile of the New Teſtament, the day of judgment: the reſult will be, that although it be probable, that *Oneſiphorus* at that time was dead (becauſe in his ſalutations he ſalutes his houſhold, without naming him who was the *major doma*, againſt his cuſtom of ſalutations in other places:) yet beſides this, the prayer was for ſuch a bleſſing to him whoſe demonſtration and reception could not be but after death; which implies clearly, that then there is need of mercy and by conſequence the dead people, even to the day of judgment incluſively, are the ſubject of a miſery, the object of God's mercy, and therefore fit to be commemorated in the duties of our piety and charity, and that we are to recommend their condition to God, not only to give them more

* 2 Tim. 1, 18.

glory,

glory, in the reunion, but to pity them to ſuch purpoſes in which they need; which becauſe they are not revealed to us in particular, it hinders us not in recommending the perſons in particular to God's mercy, but ſhould rather excite our charity and devotion: for it being certain that they have a need of mercy, and it being uncertain how great their need is, it may concern the prudence of charity to be the more earneſt, as not knowing the greatneſs of their neceſſity.

XII. And if there ſhould be any uncertainty in theſe arguments, yet its having been the univerſal practice of the church of God in all places, and in all ages till within theſe hundred years, is a very great inducement for any member of the church to believe that in the firſt traditions of chriſtianity, and the inſtitutions apoſtolical, there was nothing delivered againſt this practice, but very much to inſinuate or enjoin it; becauſe the practice of it was at the firſt, and was univerſal. And if any man ſhall doubt of this, he ſhews nothing but that he is ignorant of the records of the church, it being plain in * *Tertullian* and St. † *Cyprian* (who were the eldeſt writers of the Latin church) that in their times it was *ab antiquo*, the cuſtom of the church to pray for the ſouls of the faithful departed, in the dreadful myſteries: and it was an inſtitution apoſtolical (ſays one of them) and ſo tranſmitted to the following ages of the church, and when once it began upon ſlight grounds and diſcontent to be conteſted againſt by *Aërius*, the man was preſently condemned for a heretick, as appears in *Epiphanius*.

XIII. But I am not to conſider the arguments for the doctrine itſelf, although the probability

* De corona milit. c. 3. & de monogam. c. 10. † Ep. 66.

and

and fair pretence of them may help to excuſe ſuch perſons, who upon theſe or the like grounds do heartily believe it. But I am to conſider that whether it be true or falſe, there is no manner of malice in it, and at the worſt, it is but a wrong error upon the right ſide of charity, and concluded againſt by its adverſaries upon the confidence of ſuch arguments, which poſſibly are not ſo probable as the grounds pretended for it.

XIV. And if the ſame judgment might be made of any more of their doctrines, I think it were better men were not furious, in the condemning ſuch queſtions which either they underſtood not upon the grounds of their proper arguments, or at leaſt conſider not, as ſubjected in the perſons, and leſſened by circumſtances, by the innocency of the event, or other prudential conſiderations.

XV. But the other article is harder to be judged of, and hath made greater ſtirs in chriſtendom, and hath been daſht at with more impetuous objections, and ſuch as do more trouble the queſtion of toleration. For if the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation be falſe, (as upon much evidence we believe it is) then 'tis accuſed of introducing idolatry, giving divine worſhip to a creature, adoring of bread and wine, and then comes in the precept of God to the Jews, that thoſe prophets who perſuaded to idolatry ſhould be ſlain. *

XVI. But here we muſt deliberate; *for it is concerning the lives of men*,, and yet a little deliberation may ſuffice: for idolatry is a forſaking the true God, and giving divine worſhip to a creature or to an idol, that is, to an imaginary God, who hath no foundation in eſſence or ex-

* Deut. 13.

iſtence: and is that kind of ſuperſtition which by divines is called the ſuperſtition of an undue object: now it is evident that the object of their adoration (that which is repreſented to them in their minds, their thoughts, and purpoſes, and by which God, principally if not ſolely, takes eſtimate of human actions) in the bleſſed ſacrament, is the only true and eternal God, hypoſtatically joined with his holy humanity, which humanity they believe actually preſent under the veil of the ſacramental ſigns: and if they thought him not preſent, they are ſo far from worſhiping the bread in this caſe, that themſelves profeſs it to be idolatry to do ſo, which is a demonſtration that their ſoul hath nothing in it that is idolatrical. If their confidence and fanciful opinion hath engaged them upon ſo great miſtake (as without doubt it hath) yet the will hath nothing in it, but what is a great enemy to idolatry, *Et nihil ardet in inferno niſi propria voluntas:* and although they have done violence to all philoſophy, and the reaſon of man, and undone and cancelled the principles of two or three ſciences, to bring in this article, yet they have a divine revelation whoſe literal and grammatical ſenſe, if that ſenſe were intended, would warrant them to do violence to all the ſciences in the circle; and indeed, that tranſubſtantiation is openly and violently againſt natural reaſon, is no argument to make them diſbelieve it, who believe the myſtery of the trinity in all thoſe niceties of explication which are in the ſchool (and which now adays paſs for the doctrine of the church) with as much violence to the principles of natural and ſupernatural philoſophy, as can be imagined to be in the point of tranſubſtantiation.

XVII.

XVII. 1. But for the article itſelf, we all ſay that Chriſt is there preſent ſome way or other extraordinary; and it will not be amiſs to worſhip him at that time, when he gives himſelf to us in ſo myſterious a manner, and with ſo great advantages; eſpecially ſince the whole office is a conſociation of divers actions of religion and divine worſhip. Now in all opinions of thoſe men who think it an act of religion to communicate and to offer, a divine worſhip is given to Chriſt, and is tranſmitted to him by mediation of that action and that ſacrament, and it is no more in the church of *Rome*, but that they differ and miſtake infinitely in the manner of his preſence; which error is wholly ſeated in the underſtanding, and does not communicate with the will; for all agree that the divinity and the humanity of the ſon of God is the ultimate and adequate object of divine adoration, and that it is incommunicable to any creature whatſoever, and before they venture to paſs an act of adoration, they believe the bread to be annihilated or turned into his ſubſtance who may lawfully be worſhiped; and they who have theſe thoughts, are as much enemies of idolatry, as they that underſtand better how to avoid that inconvenience which is ſuppoſed to be the crime, which they formally hate, and we materially avoid: this conſideration was concerning the doctrine itſelf.

XVIII. 2. And now for any danger to mens perſons for ſuffering ſuch a doctrine, this I ſhall ſay, that if they who do it, are not formally guilty of idolatry, there is no danger that they whom they perſuade to it ſhould be guilty; and what perſons ſoever believe it to be idolatry, to worſhip the ſacrament, while that perſuaſion remains will never be brought to it, there is no

fear of that: and he that perſuades them to do it by altering their perſuaſions and beliefs, does no hurt but altering the opinions of the men, and abuſing their underſtandings; but when they believe it to be no idolatry, then their ſo believing it is ſufficient ſecurity from that crime which hath ſo great a tincture and reſidency in the will, that from thence only it hath its being criminal.

XIX. 3. However, if it were idolatry, I think the precept of God to the Jews of killing falſe and idolatrous prophets will be no warrant for chriſtians ſo to do: for in the caſe of the apoſtles and the men of *Samaria*, when *James* and *John* would have called for fire to deſtroy them, even as *Elias* did under *Moſes*'s law, Chriſt diſtinguiſhed the ſpirit of *Elias* from his own ſpirit, and taught them a leſſon of great ſweetneſs, and conſigned this truth to all ages of the church, that ſuch ſeverity is not conſiſtent with the meekneſs which Chriſt by his example and ſermons hath made a precept evangelical; at moſt it was but a judicial law and no more of argument to make it neceſſary to us, than the Moſaical precepts of putting adulterers to death, and trying the accuſed perſons by the waters of jealouſy.

XX. And thus in theſe two inſtances, I have given account what is to be done in toleration of diverſity of opinions: the reſult of which is principally this: *Let the prince and the ſecular power have a care the common wealth be ſafe.* For whether ſuch or ſuch a ſect of chriſtians be to be permitted is a queſtion rather political than religious; for as for the concernments of religion, theſe inſtances have furniſhed us with ſufficient to determine us in our duties as to that particular, and by one of theſe all particulars may be judged.

XXI. And now it were a ſtrange inhumanity to permit Jews in a common wealth, whoſe intereſt is ſerved by their inhabitation, and yet upon equal grounds of ſtate and policy, not to permit differing ſects of chriſtians: for although poſſibly there is more danger, mens perſuaſions ſhould be altered in a commixture of divers ſects of chriſtians, yet there is not ſo much danger when they are changed from chriſtian to chriſtian, as if they be turned from chriſtian to jew, as many are daily in *Spain* and *Portugal*.

XXII. And this is not to be excuſed by ſaying the church hath no power over them, *qui foris ſunt*, as Jews are: for it is true the church in the capacity of ſpiritual regimen hath nothing to do with them, becauſe they are not her dioceſe: yet the prince hath to do with them, when they are ſubjects of his regimen: they may not be excommunicated any more than a ſtone may be killed, becauſe they are not of the chriſtian communion; but they are living perſons, parts of the common wealth, infinitely deceived in their religion, and very dangerous if they offer to perſuade men to their opinions, and are the greateſt enemies of Chriſt, whoſe honour and the intereſt of whoſe ſervice a chriſtian prince is bound with all his power to maintain. And when the queſtion is of puniſhing diſagreeing perſons with death, the church hath equally nothing to do with them both, for ſhe hath nothing to do with the temporal ſword; but the prince whoſe ſubjects equally chriſtians and jews are, hath equal power over their perſons; for a chriſtian is no more a ſubject than a jew is, the prince hath upon them both the ſame power of life and death; ſo that the jew by being no chriſtian is not *foris*, or any more an exempt perſon for his body, or his life than

the chriſtian is: and yet in all churches where the ſecular power hath temporal reaſon to tolerate the jews, they are tolerated without any ſcruple in religion; which thing is of more conſideration, becauſe the jews are direct blaſphemers of the Son of God, and blaſphemy by their own law, the law of *Moſes*, is made capital; and might with greater reaſon be inflicted upon them, who acknowledge its obligation, than urged upon chriſtians as an authority, enabling princes to put them to death, who are accuſed of accidental and conſecutive blaſphemy and idolatry reſpectively, which yet they hate and diſavow with much zeal and heartineſs of perſuaſion. And I cannot yet learn a reaſon why we ſhall not be more complying with them, who are of the houſhold of faith; for at leaſt they are children, though they be but rebellious children (and if they were not, what hath the mother to do with them any more than with the jews?) They are in ſome relation or habitude of the family, for they are conſigned with the ſame baptiſm, profeſs the ſame faith delivered by the apoſtles, are erected in the ſame hope, and look for the ſame glory to be revealed to them, at the coming of their common Lord and Saviour, to whoſe ſervice according to their underſtanding they have vowed themſelves: and if the diſagreeing perſons be to be eſteemed as heathens and publicans, yet not worſe, *Have no company with them*, that's the worſt that is to be done to ſuch a man in St. *Paul*'s judgment, *Yet count him not as an enemy, but admoniſh him as a brother.*

SECT.

SECT. XXI.

Of the duty of particular Churches in allowing Communion.

I. FROM theſe premiſes, we are eaſily inſtructed concerning the lawfulneſs or duty reſpectively of chriſtian communion, which is differently to be conſidered in reſpect of particular churches to each other, and of particular men to particular churches: for as for particular churches, they are bound to allow communion to all thoſe that profeſs the ſame faith upon which the apoſtles gave communion; for whatſoever preſerves us as members of the church, gives us title to the communion of ſaints, and whatſoever faith or belief that is to which God hath promiſed heaven, that faith makes us members of the Catholick church: ſince therefore the judicial acts of the church are then moſt prudent and religious when they neareſt imitate the example and piety of God: *to make the way to heaven ſtraighter than God made it*, or to deny to communicate with thoſe with whom God will vouchſafe to be united, and to refuſe our charity to thoſe who have the ſame faith, becauſe they have not all our opinions, and believe not every thing neceſſary which we over-value; is impious and ſchiſmatical, it infers tyranny on one part, and perſuades and tempts to uncharitableneſs and animoſities on both; it diſſolves ſocieties, and is an enemy to peace; it buſies men in impertinent wranglings, and by names of men and titles of factions it conſigns the intereſted parties to act their differences to the height, and makes them neglect thoſe advan-

tages which piety and a good life bring to the reputation of christian religion and societies.

II. And therefore * *Vincentius Lirinensis*, and indeed the whole church accounted the *Donatists* hereticks upon this very ground, because they did imperiously deny their communion to all who were not of their persuasion, whereas the authors of that opinion for which they first did separate, and make a sect, because they did not break the church's peace, nor magisterially prescribed to others, were in that disagreeing and error accounted catholicks. *Divisio enim & dissensio facit vos hæreticos, pax & unitas faciunt Catholicos* said † St. *Austin*; and to this sense is that of St. *Paul*, *If I had all faith and have not charity, I am nothing*: He who upon confidence of his true belief denies a charitable communion to his brother, loses the reward of both. And if Pope *Victor* had been as charitable to the *Asiaticks* as Pope *Anicetus* and St. *Polycarp* were to each other in the same disagreeing concerning Easter, *Victor* had not been πλημμελεστερον καταστασιασεν, so bitterly reproved and condemned as he was for the uncharitable managing of his disagreeing by ‡ *Polycrates* and *Irenæus*; *Concordantia enim, quæ est charitatis effectus, est unio voluntatum non opinionum.* § True faith which leads to charity leads on to that which unites wills and affections, not opinions.

III. Upon these or the like considerations, the Emperor *Zeno* published his ἑνωτικον in which he made the *Nicene* creed to be the medium of catholick communion, and although he lived after the council of *Chalcedon*, yet he made not

* Cap. 11. Vid. Pacian. Epist. ad Sempron. 2. † L. 2. c. 95. contra liter. Petilian. ‡ Euseb. l. 5. c. 25. 26. § Aquin. 22 æ. q. 37. a 1.

the

the decrees of that council an inſtrument of its reſtraint and limit, as preferring the peace of Chriſtendom, and the union of charity far before a forced or pretended unity of perſuaſion, which never was or ever will be real and ſubſtantial; and although it were very convenient if it could be had, yet it is therefore not neceſſary becauſe it is impoſſible; "and if men pleaſe, whatever ad-"vantages to the publick would be conſequent to "it, may be ſupplied by a charitable compliance "and mutual permiſſion of opinion, and the offices "of a brotherly affection preſcribed us by the laws of "chriſtianity." And we have ſeen it, that all ſects of chriſtians, when they have an end to be ſerved upon a third, have permitted that liberty to a ſecond, which we now contend for, and which they formerly denied, but now grant, that by joining hands, they might be the ſtronger to deſtroy the third. The *Arrians* and *Meletians* joined againſt the Catholicks; The Catholicks and *Novatians* joined againſt the *Arrians*. Now if men would do that for charity which they do for intereſt, it were handſomer and more ingenuous; for that they do permit each others diſagreeings for their intereſt's ſake, convinces them of the lawfulneſs of the thing, or elſe the unlawfulneſs of their own proceedings; and therefore it were better they would ſerve the ends of charity than of faction, for then that good end would hallow the proceeding and make it both more prudent and more pious, while it ſerves the deſign of religious purpoſes.

SECT.

SECT. XXII.

That particular men may communicate with Churches of different perſuaſions, and how far they may do it.

AS for the duty of particular men in the queſtion of communicating with churches of different perſuaſions, it is to be regulated according to the laws of thoſe churches; for if they require no impiety, or any thing unlawful as the condition of their communion, then they communicate with them as they are ſervants of Chriſt, as diſciples of his doctrine and ſubjects to his laws, and the particular diſtinguiſhing doctrine of their ſect hath no influence or communication with him, who from another ſect is willing to communicate with all the ſervants of their common Lord: For ſince no church of one name is infallible, a wiſe man may have either the misfortune, or a reaſon, to believe of every one in particular, that ſhe errs in ſome article or other; either he cannot communicate with any, or elſe he may communicate with all, that do not make a ſin or the profeſſion of an error to be the condition of their communion. And therefore, as every particular church is bound to tolerate diſagreeing perſons in the ſenſes and for the reaſons above explicated; ſo every particular perſon is bound to tolerate her, that is, not to refuſe her communion when he may have it on innocent conditions: For what is it to me if the Greek church deny proceſſion of the third perſon from the ſecond, ſo ſhe will give me the right hand of fellowſhip (though I affirm it) therefore becauſe I profeſs the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, and retain all matters

matters of faith and neceſſity? But this thing will ſcarce be reduced to practice: for few churches that have framed bodies of confeſſion, and articles, will endure any perſon that is not of the ſame confeſſion; "which is a plain demonſtration that "ſuch bodies of confeſſion and articles do much "hurt, by becoming inſtruments of ſeparating and "dividing communions, and making unneceſſary "or uncertain propoſitions a certain mean of "ſchiſm and diſunion." But then men would do well to conſider whether or no ſuch proceedings do not derive the guilt of ſchiſm upon them who leaſt think it, and whether of the two is the ſchiſmatick? he that makes unneceſſary and (ſuppoſing the ſtate of things) inconvenient impoſitions, or he that diſobeys them, becauſe he cannot without doing violence to his conſcience believe them? He that parts communion, becauſe without ſin he could not entertain it, or they who have made it neceſſary for him to ſeparate, by requiring ſuch conditions which to no man are ſimply neceſſary, and to his particular are either ſinful or impoſſible?

III. The ſum of all is this, There is no ſecurity in any thing or to any perſon, but in the pious and hearty endeavours of a good life, and neither ſin nor error impedes it from producing its proportionate and intended effect: becauſe it is a direct deletery to ſin and an excuſe to errors, by making them innocent, and therefore harmleſs. And indeed this is the intendment and deſign of faith: For (that we may join both ends of this diſcourſe together) therefore certain articles are preſcribed to us, and propounded to our underſtanding, that ſo we might be ſupplied with inſtructions, with motives and engagements to incline and determine our wills to the obedience of Chriſt. So that obedience is juſt ſo conſequent

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to faith, as the acts of the will are to the dictates of the understanding: Faith therefore being in order to obedience, and so far excellent as itself is a part of obedience or the promoter of it, or an engagement to it: it is evident that if obedience and a good life be secured upon the most reasonable and proper grounds of christianity, that is, upon *the apostles creed*, then faith also is secured. Since whatsoever is beside the duties, the order of a good life, cannot be a part of faith, because upon faith a good life is built; all other articles by not being necessary, are no otherwise to be required, but as they are to be obtained and found out, that is, morally, and fallibly, and humanly; it is fit all truths be promoted fairly and properly, and yet but few articles prescribed magisterially, nor framed into symbols and bodies of confession; least of all after such compositures, should men proceed so furiously as to say all disagreeing after such declarations to be damnable for the future, and capital for the present. But this very thing is reason enough to make men more limited in their prescriptions, because it is more charitable in such suppositions so to do.

III. But in the thing itself, because few kinds of errors are damnable, it is reasonable as few should be capital. And because every thing that is damnable in itself and before God's judgment seat, is not discernable before men (and questions disputable are of this condition) it is also very reasonable, that fewer be capital, than what are damnable, and that such questions should be permitted to men to believe, because they must be left to God to judge. It concerns all persons to see that they do their best to find out truth; and if they do, it is certain that, let the error be never so damnable, they shall escape the error

or

or the misery of being damned for it. *And if God will not be angry at men, for being invincibly deceived, why should Men be angry one at another?* For he who is most displeased at another man's error, may also be tempted in his own will, and as much deceived in his understanding: For if he may fail in what he can chuse, he may also fail in what he cannot chuse: His understanding is no more secured than his will, nor his faith more than his obedience. It is his own fault if he offend God in either, but whatsoever is not to be avoided; as errors, which are incident oftentimes even to the best and most inquisitive of men, are not offences against God, and therefore not to be punished, or restrained by men: but all such opinions, in which the publick interests of the common-wealth, and the foundation of faith, and a good life, are not concerned, are to be permitted freely: *Quisque abundet in sensu suo*, was the doctrine of St. *Paul*, and that is argument and conclusion too; and they were excellent words which St. *Ambrose* said in attestation of this great truth; *Nec Imperiale est, libertatem dicendi negare; nec sacerdotale, quod sentias, non dicere.*

I end with a story, which I find in the Jews' books. "When *Abraham* sat at his tent-door, "according to his custom waiting to entertain "strangers, he espied a man coming towards "him, stooping and leaning upon his staff, weary "with travel and age, for he was an hundred "years old. *Abraham* received him kindly, "washed his Feet, provided supper, caused him "to sit down: but observing that the old man "eat and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing "on his meat; *Abraham* asked him, why he did "not worship the God of heaven? The old man "told him, that he worshipped the *fire* only, and

"acknowledged

" acknowledged no other God. *Abraham* grew " *ſo zealouſly angry*, that he thruſt the old man " out of his tent, and expoſed him to all the " evils of the night, and an unguarded condition. " When the old man was gone, God called to " *Abraham*, and aſked him, where the ſtranger " was? He replied, I thruſt him away, becauſe " he did not worſhip Thee. God anſwered him; " I have ſuffered him theſe hundred years, al- " though he diſhonoured Me; and couldſt not " Thou endure him one night, when he gave " Thee no trouble? Upon this, ſaith the ſtory, " *Abraham* fetched him back again, and gave " him *hoſpitable entertainment and wiſe inſtruction.*" —*Go thou and do likewiſe*; and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of *Abraham*.

THE END

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

ERRATA.

PAGE 7, line 34, for *Jeſus*, read *Jeſum*. P. 16, l. 18, dele *on*. P. 62, l. 25, f. *Damaſcus*, r. *Damaſus*. P. 67, l. 16, f. ανατοπην, r. ανατροπην. P. 76, l. 7, f. *Damaſcus*, r. *Damaſus*. P. 78, l. 19, f. *believe*, r. *belief*. P. 81, l. 11, after *read*, add, *as Gothofrid and ſome others would have it*, δια τες αγελες, or rather, τας αγελας, or τες αγελαις, *that the*. P. 81, l. 15, *for the loſs of a letter*, r. *the little change of ſome letters*. P. 114, l. 27, f. *tradiones*, r. *traditiones*. P. 124, l. 25, f. *leſs uſeleſs*, r. *uſeleſs*. P. 184, l. 29, f. *excuſe*, r. *uſe*. P. 188, *ult.* f. *Cap. per venerabitem fillii*, r. *Cap. per venerabilem filii*. P. 201, N. f. *regulum prævaricari*, r. *regulam prævaricati*. P. 274, f. *Stacius and Urſæus*, r. *Itacius and Urſatus*. P. 276, l. 7, f. *did think*, r. *did not think*. P. 282, l. 35, f. *opening*, r. *opining*. P. 283, N. f. *ſuſpici*, r. *ſuſcipi*. P. 287, *ult.* f. *need*, r. *need not*. P. 296, l. 7, f. *infants in capacity*, r. *infants' incapacity*. P. 305, l. 1, f. *and do*, r. *who do*. P. 308, penult. f. *them*, r. *to them*. P. 311, l. 19, f. *chaſed*, r. *chafed*.